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# THE KEEPER OF THE KEYS

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

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# THE KEEPER OF THE KEYS

Being Essays on Christian Thought in the  
Twentieth Century

BY THE

REV. F. W. ORDE WARD, B.A., OXFORD

(Author of *MATIN BELLS*, *NEW CENTURY HYMNS*, *PRISONER  
OF LOVE*, etc.)



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GENERAL

*"I am He that Liveth and was dead; and behold I am alive for evermore and have the Keys of Hades and of Death."—Rev. i. 18.*

*"He that is Holy, He that is True, He that hath the Key of David, He that openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth."—Rev. iii. 7.*

NOTE.

For permission to republish the first section, the author desires to thank the Editor of the *Hibbert Journal*, to whose sympathy any good in this book is due.

“ Strong Son of God, immortal Love,  
Whom we that have not seen Thy Face  
By faith and faith alone embrace,  
Believing where we cannot prove.

Our little systems have their day,  
They have their day and cease to be;  
They are but broken lights of Thee,  
And Thou, O Lord, art more than they.”

*In Memoriam.*



## THE JUDGMENT OF THE CROSS.

---

*“ God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.”—Gal. vi. 14.*

Howe'er I live, Thou judgest me,  
Dear Saviour, with Thy blessed Rood,  
Whereto I turn when most I flee;  
Though, at my wildest wayward mood,  
I cannot hide except in Thee.  
The lightest word, the lowliest thought  
I feel is carried to that Bar,  
Before which we are hourly brought  
And standeth the remotest star.  
Thereat is, with each hidden care,  
The heart of everything laid bare.

Man as he is and Nature's core  
Are thus unriddled, and the Truth  
Outshines of all the bane we bore;  
Redeemèd earth repairs its youth,

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And touches now the Eternal Shore.

Matter is only veiled Mind

And just the Spirit's spacious dress,

That with Thy Wounds is countersigned  
Shadow of their great Loveliness.

I see, in hallowed earth and sky,

Homely the Court of Calvary.

This body (Plato's prison) is thus

A holy Temple for Thy sake,

The sanctuaried soul in us

Just what Thy Passion would re-make,  
But with its Glory tremulous.

Each Spring comes as the piercing push  
Of Thy sweet Thorns in travail's maze,

And every plant a Burning Bush  
With all Thy Mystery ablaze.

Dear Lord, had not those Sufferings been,  
The lands could wear no virgin green.

Thine Incarnation and Thy Cross

Lie round, beneath, and o'er us bent;  
Purge us and Nature from our dross

By their Eternal Sacrament—  
I find young life within each loss;

And hence, because Thy sacred Flesh  
Hath in our weakness once assumed

These wants, the world is born afresh  
Daily and with Thy Light illumed.

No sunrise now but, with its dew,  
Proclaimeth earth baptized anew.



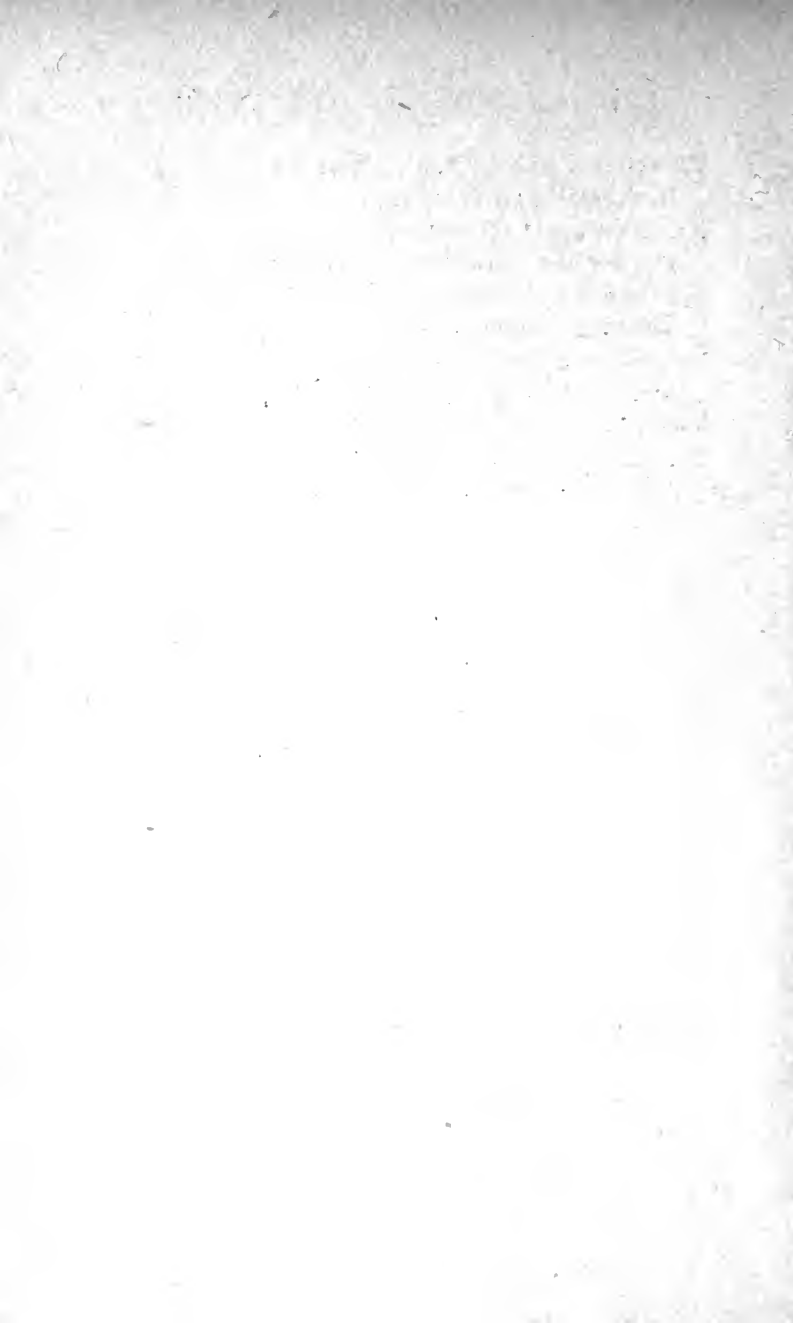
Therefore I know Thou judgest me

In everything I do or say,  
Salvation could no moment be

But for the Sentence on my way—  
Wherein I walk, whereby I see.

The resurrection of the flower  
Condemneth me or doth acquit,  
And but for Calvary's secret Power  
This heart were not so infinite.

The Cross, that saves, pronounces doom,  
And in its death all things rebloom.



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# The Keeper of the Keys

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## I

### THE LORD IS A MAN OF WAR

ULTIMATE perfection seems suggested by the union of opposites in their very antagonism, emerging from the everlasting clash of atoms and ions, unfolding throughout the dynasties of nature and departments of Thought and restated predicates, and expressing itself behind and beyond the fundamental principle of subject *plus* object. We posit one (self), and immediately the other (not self) arises to confront and complete the synthesis by apparent contradiction. The perpetual interaction of these two factors appears the law of the Cosmos. And the synthesis is antithesis. Indeed, the unit of knowledge might be better defined (not as subject *plus* object but) as subject *contra* object. Life, according to both science and philosophy, appears to be a ceaseless conflict, a condition of unstable equilibrium, the

product of rival forces contending for the mastery, in which Evil the Eternal Minus is being gradually eliminated and will perhaps go on being eliminated for ever and ever. The world, yet in its giant infancy, is simply realising itself in God, or we may say, on the other hand, that God is surely realising Himself in us, and will continue so to do when all the relics of all the civilisations of Greece and Rome and the Modern Age have been swept away like so many toys or idle epiphenomena. Man now is like a sleeper darkly awakening from a dream. And now and then and here and there he gets glimpses of blue sky, and begins to understand some simple truths, though at present he only can touch their uttermost fringe.

Attraction is repulsion, and again and even more so repulsion is attraction. The mysterious battle, physical, moral, mental, spiritual, proceeds and must proceed for ever. Time is cheap, and we have all eternity before us. *Deus patiens quia æternus.* Every day, in some moral crisis, souls are infinitely attracted by the very temptations that repel them most. And love, while it solicits, yet at the same time bids us recoil in unspeakable despair. The final free volition, the turning of the balance, depends on the individual temperament, taken in connection with the education and the environment. *The Lord is a Man of War, the Lord is His Name.* Progress by antagonism, life by antagonism, issues in our consciousness as His fundamental law, to which He submits Himself and by which He limits Himself—if indeed it be a

limit at all [and not the metaphysical content of infinity]. The end here is the pursuit and the pursuit is the end, fighting for an attainable and yet unattainable perfection. This unity in division seems embedded in the mind as an integral and organic part of the Cosmos. We are born *both* Platonists and Aristotelians, *both* Realists and Idealists, *both* Materialists and Spiritualists. No doubt one factor must be the predominating partner or combatant, but still (the truth remains) we possess by an inexorable psychological necessity the two constituents and two competitors, if one only exists to be always negated. Light and shade, joy and sorrow, right and wrong, good and evil, hope and fear, life and death, are the opposed and yet united ways in which we think and feel and suffer and know and live. Like the two pillars Jachin and Boaz, stand before the porch of the Temple of Truth the Everlasting Yea and the Everlasting Nay. It seems almost superfluous to add that we experience, we find, nothing quite pure and separate and unmingled. Our emotions are mixed, love is never far from hatred, nor smiles from tears. No error seems to be all error, and no truth all truth. Love and truth for ever keep purging themselves of the contradictory alloy, and in the process become love and truth. There can be no rest, no truce for either antagonist. Peace would be fatal to the good, and this solution would merely be its dissolution. God fulfils Himself in many ways, but emphatically and pre-eminently by conflict. To stand still for a moment is to go backward or fall. Probably the

explanation of this tremendous problem lies rooted in the very Nature of God, who is at once Himself male and female, One and All, limited and unlimited, and still essentially a Personal God. Metaphysically, indeed, how could He express Himself otherwise than by this fundamental law of the Universe? Is subject without object a thinkable fact? And as soon as we have subject and object as the *principium principiorum* for any practical thought, or useful conduct, we see it must inevitably be not simply subject *with* object, but subject *against* object, in an antagonism which alone makes life possible and fruitful. There is true teaching and profound philosophy in the third chapter of Ecclesiastes. And again, "*God hath set the one over against the other.*"

Amid the fog and cloud of combatants who strive for they know not what, appear to emerge a few principles which no one disputes, that may be received as certain as any facts. Man is a religious being, and man is a sociable being, and sociable because religious. He fears, he loves, he worships a Power or Powers beyond and above him, and yet around and even within him. This awe, this wonder, which is a kind of broken knowledge, draws man to man not merely for purposes of mutual defence, but also for purposes of a common cult. For the Power or Powers outside man, and yet somehow mysteriously associated with him, must be revered and propitiated by rites and ceremonies and offerings. Primitive man seeks protection against his very God, whom he admires,



hates, dreads, and yet always adores, and finds it in the gregarious life of the family and tribe, through all the predatory stages and pastoral stages, down to the colossal and glorified egotism of hostile nationalities and ethnic enmities. But from the very outset he believes and disbelieves, he accepts and he rejects, according as the factor of faith or reason predominates. For at the beginning of things the religious feeling, religiousness, embraces two different and opposed and yet congruous factors, the sense of and the appeal to authority or tradition, and the sense of and the appeal to inquiry. And these two factors are one in the light of a higher unity which transcends and includes them both. They are absorbed and harmonised in its grasp. And here we reach the bedrock of the human mind, which in its constitution is compelled to work by and through contraries, and can only achieve any fruitful or satisfactory results by the collision of opposites. It seems futile to quarrel with the machinery of the given *φροντιστήριον* or thinking shop. The way we are driven we must go, the way we are built we must follow, for much as we may modify we did not make ourselves, and even Plotinus submitted to his limitations. The conflict then between faith and reason, prescription and the right of private judgment, Catholic and Protestant, religion or science, is and must be eternal, simply because it is rooted in a psychological necessity. We see in the contest but the dualism of Nature, the two sides of the human mind apparently fighting against each other and yet really co-opera-

ting to the same end—"to one far-off Divine event." It is the everlasting *unfitness* of things—yes, even the survival of the *unfittest*—that arrives at any issues at all. To ask for stable equilibrium is to ask for death. The perpetual friction, the impertinent schisms, the strife of contending interests, the armed and antagonistic camps, all these are only so many evidences of the mind divided against itself that thus attains some new and higher unity. Faith and reason must quarrel, because in no other way can truth be elicited, but their unceasing quarrel is merely the quarrel of friends who agree to differ and differ to agree. We cannot repudiate our nature and the very framework of our minds. It is impossible to think out anything except in this manner. But the misfortune remains, that some people will have nothing to do with reason. This, however, only applies to religion and its collaterals. For in the ordinary affairs of everyday life both parties thankfully welcome and employ the assistance of both reason and faith alike, or, at any rate, of the one they profess to despise most. Indeed, men of science, who are scornfully sceptical as to the blessings of faith, in worldly matters often distinguish themselves by being curiously and even childishly credulous. Logic hardly enters into practical procedure yet, and our greatest men display the most splendid inconsistencies. The magnificent philosopher descends from his mountain summits, to be the easy prey of a bubble company or the idle sport of some specious and fraudulent friend. Even he

cannot remember always to consider both sides of the question, and bring both sides of his mind to bear upon it—to consent simply after just and adequate criticism. It seems strange that the persons who perceive most clearly the advantages of competition, with or without equality of opportunity, whether in Party Government or in fiscal discussions, or vestry meetings, cease to be rational when their own private interests are touched or their particular clique is concerned, and become either brutally critical or blindly credulous, till the local disturbance has passed. They refuse to exercise both their faith and reason, which are equally their royal prerogatives.

An accurate psychological analysis would assure any observer that the broadest and grandest harmonies arise from the battle of incongruous elements. No permanent conquests can come otherwise. Protestantism is only one aspect of the human mind as it moves and works, and represents the forces of science, reason, free inquiry, liberty of thought and action, the right of individual initiative. The word may be an offence to many, but the thing remains and is and must be a fundamental fact. We cannot escape from it, because we cannot escape from the natural operations of our minds. Whether we know it or not, whether we like it or not, we are Protestants to the bitter end, in so far as we ever dare to think and act for ourselves, and go our own way in any deliberate path of reasoned preference. The spirit is ingrained in the grossest slave. At times he breaks his bonds,

renounces his taskmasters, and chooses to be himself. We must breathe the mental atmosphere that we find, though we dearly love to forge fetters for ourselves as well as others. Protestantism, incidentally connected with a particular piece of history and religious development, at bottom means the instinct of independence that may be scotched but cannot be killed outright. Fire burns in its coldest ashes, and what is more terrible than dead fires? It would be ridiculous, were it not so infinitely pathetic, to see great minds repudiating their birth-right and the specific regalia of their royalty, in repudiating their Protestant privileges! It is denying the pit from which they are dug and the rock from which they are hewn. The man flying from his shadow seems less absurd and pitiable than the man who endeavours to elude himself and the machinery of his own mind, and that which makes man pre-eminently man—the power of reasoning. To protest is to exercise an inalienable right and to take our stand upon the charter of our humanity. It does not imply the narrow claims of bigotry, the call of ignorance and intolerance and prejudice, in spite of the accidental excrescences too frequently associated with the name. The so-called Reformation was really the renaissance of the soul, and the human mind re-awakening to its inheritance and dignity, and denouncing the monopoly of freedom. The protagonists in this supreme outcome did not guess their own greatness, could not perhaps then know its tremendous significance, were too close to the events evolving to measure their dimensions, but

still they were fighting none the less for the liberties of the human mind. That a particular creed assumed all the credit and revelled in a glory that was more rational than religious, and carried off the apparent honours of victory, proved of small consequence in the light of the final issues. The zealots of a sombre superstition sharpened the sword that they bore really against it and themselves. Contemplating murder, they committed suicide.

The same necessity emerges from the opposite and correlative of Protestantism, the passion for tradition and the appeal to authority. As they contradict and exclude each other, so they complete each other in a higher synthesis. Catholicism possesses its own justification in the *testimonium animæ naturaliter Catholicæ*. Were the mind purely, simply, and entirely Protestant, we should lack the needful antagonism from which alone all good effects proceed. The clash of the rival energies tends to a better balance in the long run and to fertility. Either force by itself is a barren virgin. The mind that is all Catholic and always and only Catholic will be starved and stunted, dare nothing, do nothing, hope nothing, be nothing. Its life is death, the growth of the grave—*corruptio optimi pessima*. Let authority have its proper place and weight, let it be respected and obeyed in reason and season, but unless it is also criticised, questioned, and mercilessly attacked, it will act but as the paralysing influence of the dead hand. Till authority has been turned upside down, pulled to pieces, dragged in the mire and trampled on, it can be of little use or value.

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It will stand out of drawing, with false proportions and misleading perspective. Authority must be denied, and denied again and again, before it may be fully affirmed, and it must be crucified first if it would be crowned hereafter. Untested, unexamined, unmeasured, it exists as a source of danger and breeds disease and decay. But when it has been challenged, chastened, purged with flame, it comes from the ordeal if storm-beaten strong, and if pruned a blessing, to abide among the world's few permanent possessions. But what would free inquiry be without this salutary and solid check? An evil and not a good, a tyrant and not a servant, a traitor and not a friend, for there is no autocracy so cruel as the licence in the masquerade of liberty. Only one greater argument than authority exists, only one greater power, and that is freedom. But they correct and qualify each other's virtues, they supplement each other's deficiencies, they antagonise each other in a fruitful embrace and are reconciled in a broader and loftier unity. The uncatholic mind that scorns tradition becomes hard, narrow, and unproductive. And just by the constant action and reaction between faith and reason, authority and criticism, do churches grow and states flourish in a common movement towards a civilisation which will reconcile differences by merging them in a vaster and deeper union. Opinion, the weapon of the one, and the stormy petrel of evolution, always ahead of present institutions, and faith, the weapon of the other, for ever meet and for ever clash like positive and negative, but yet when most divided are most

agreed, and work out in friendly strife the inevitable ascent.

If, indeed, religion is the ultimate interpretation of life, as it appears to be, and not philosophy, we may expect to find its track everywhere and the key at last to all questions that really are questions. For there abound inquiries that should never be asked, and when asked should never be answered. We mean, of course, the problems bound up with the limitations of the mind, beyond the reach of experience and observation, in which psychology only plays with words and draws mere verbal distinctions. These may be the money of fools, they are certainly but the counters of wise men. And now, if we speak of the communities into which the social instinct has grouped us, we discover immediately the same dualism, the old antagonism of divided interests, the two hostile camps, which yet by their very opposition hold each other together, and are overcome at last by the working power of a higher unity. As in the sphere of religion we found the synthesis by contradiction in faith and inquiry, in authority and reason, so here in society we find the radical antithesis of the Conservative and Liberal, stability and instability, progress and repose. The appeal lies in one case to tradition and in the other to critical opinion, and they correspond respectively to the two great sides of the human mind, the faculty that accepts and retains, and the faculty that discusses and denies and lives in the chronic condition of a sort of divine discontent. And the perpetual interaction and interpretation of these rival con-

tending powers keep the given community alive in health and strength, compel it to put forth new shoots, purge it of dead or dying branches, and prove what is demonstrated every moment that the world is ruled, not merely by a little sense, but by not a little compromise and paradox.

It is the incompatibles, rather than the compatibles that unite at last. We follow the line of most and not of least resistance, to the fret and friction of unoiled wheels and unaccommodating agencies, that combine best when they quarrel, and are devoted friends because contending foes. Oh, the transparent riddle of life, with its advancement by repugnant elements and reconciliation through the fiercest mental repulsion! Party government displays a true, an unerring instinct. It is the one way in which Nature moves and God acts. We prove our position by negatives and our rules by exceptions, and in each exclusion we equally include. To deny something is to define something, and to admit this is to reject that, and to stand still in one direction is to go forward in another. Life, Nature, human Nature, has never got beyond the nursery rhyme, "Mistress Mary, quite contrary." Browning's lines imply a very great deal more than they say, and we may always read infinite suggestions between his lines. And what he never does say is what he says the best.

"Smooth Jacob still robs homely Esau,  
Now up, now down, the world's one see-saw."

There is a blind spot (*macula lutea*) in the human eye and a blind spot also in the human mind, and it is the blind spot (as with Nelson) that has the



farthest and fairest vision. The comprehensive intuition, which receives on trust the reconciliation of the eternal dualism everywhere in a stage higher, but does not understand or attempt to explain the mode of operation, takes the report kneeling, and in the sublime ignorance of a universal negative realises the fundamental agreement in difference. Custom means much, but progress means more, and their internecine war stands justified by its grand results. Christ called Himself the "Way," and symbolises the onward march and endless victories of Truth. His has been well styled the Church Militant, and wherever works the spirit of healthy progress, there works also the Spirit of Christ on the crest of the flowing tide and in the van of aggressive good. And, after all, the final appeal is to the moral sanction, behind brute force, and below the ramparts of bayonets. The mere secular arm would be paralysed without, unless fortified by some sort of faith in some sort of creed or Providence. And when the smoke of battle has cleared away, and the thunder of the guns is still, the last word will be spoken by religion, and the last stand will be made at the Cross, in the name and power of Him who came to bring a sword, and to conciliate interests by division, through perpetual Progress by Antagonism.

*"The Lord is a Man of War, the Lord is His name."* All through the Bible, both in the Old Testament and the New, we discover this teaching, and the love that perpetually strives with sinners, and could not be love unless it did strive and was just and righteous and even cruel. The wrestling

of Jacob with the angel at Peniel displays a vivid object lesson of the eternal truth. "*I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.*" "*As a prince thou hast striven with God and men and hast prevailed.*" But did Jacob seek the conflict? For our purpose and the result that followed, it matters not in the least. "*There wrestled a man with him, until the breaking of the day.*" The contest bore abundant fruit, "*And he blessed him there*"—and we may fairly add—and therefore and thereby. Again, we have a similar story in Joshua. "*Behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand. And Joshua went unto him and said unto him, Art thou for us or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay, but as captain of the host of the Lord I am come.*"

God's attitude, to say it with reverence, is provocative, and presents an eternal challenge to the human will. We are solemnly warned to stand for ever on our guard, and risk no chances in the warfare. God fights for us and with us, but He also fights *against* us by the very constitution of His own law and perhaps of His own Being as our Adversary, and yet (as such) our greatest Friend. "*Faithful are the wounds of a friend.*"<sup>1</sup> And so we read in

<sup>1</sup>In that remarkable revelation of character, called "*De Profundis*," by the late Oscar Wilde, there are passages which read like the cry wrung from a lost soul on the edge of eternity, with a depth of passion not to be mistaken for mere literary pose, and afford a grim confirmation of our main thought. "Now it seems to me," he writes in *Reading Gaol*, where the most conscientious and self-respecting artist would hardly care to attitudinise, at p. 59, "that Love of some kind is the only possible explanation

Isaiah, "*Therefore He was turned to be their enemy and He fought against them.*" Blessings come by the way—"as they went they were healed"—and incidentally as it were. In a world militant, of which every cell and every atom is a soldier and fights for its own hand, and thus and only thus for every other and for God, we (who are all co-existences) cannot live a selfish separate life. Happiness is no object, but life is. And there can be no growth, no progress, without more resistance than mere friction of bearings. "Who would be free themselves must strike the blow." We have life not to hoard and not to spend on ourselves, but to grow, through self-development, by self-sacrifice, in an endless battle that wins by losing. God's challenge cannot be evaded. It is the aspect of Nature as well as the aspect of Grace, and to decline it is to fall out of the order and fail in the very reason for our existence. *Si vis pacem para bellum.* Every new fact is a new challenge, and every old truth will have to be re-interpreted, and every fresh truth must find its ultimate justification at Calvary. The whole Cosmos hangs upon the Cross of Christ.

of the extraordinary amount of suffering that there is in the world. I cannot conceive of any other explanation. I am convinced that there is no other, and that if the world has indeed, as I have said, been built of sorrow, it has been built by the hands of Love, because in no other way could the soul of man, for whom the world was made, reach the full stature of its perfection. Pleasure for the beautiful body, but pain for the beautiful soul." Here we have a pathetic testimony to the eternal duel between the flesh and the spirit, and the result in a religious awakening and a higher moral synthesis.

## II

### ANTAGONISMS OF LIFE

AN impartial observer from another planet, with sufficient intelligence, after even a superficial investigation, would inevitably conclude Nature to be a belligerent power and Man also a belligerent power, and the whole earth in a kind of chronic warfare, Nature and Man set against each other. He would likewise see both to be at strife with themselves. Nor could this inference, however imperfect, be disputed, with the proper qualifications. It must be considered a true, if inadequate, view of things. But, should the impartial observer from outside continue his inquiries, he would assuredly discover something more, a wider, deeper law, behind and beyond the competing forces and the *prima facie* clash of conflict. He would find proceeding the vast principles of Co-operation, whereby "*all things work together for good.*" He might not be able to understand all, perhaps he could not understand much, of the inner meaning of this tremendous process, but he would not go wrong in presuming that discord was the key to the ultimate concord and division the clue to the fundamental unity. At first sight, appearances are all

in favour of a mere internecine contest. But a closer scrutiny reveals the truth that the antagonism is not real, and dissolves from a broader and loftier point of view in a grander cosmic transaction, which gathers up into itself the opposed energies, while it transforms and glorifies and reconciles them.

Physically, morally, mentally, spiritually, a disharmony underlies and runs through the whole Cosmos, to disappear in a more transcendent union and communion. To speak with all reverence, the Scripture itself recognizes this fact even in the case of the Trinity. *Ubi amor (concordia) ibi Trinitas*—yes, and therefore, *Ubi discordia ibi Trinitas*. At any rate, this must be metaphorically and metaphysically true. “*Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, and against the Man that is My Fellow, saith the Lord of Hosts.*” Wherever we trace Love, and we trace it everywhere, we meet with it as the Blessed Adversary whose perpetual challenge provokes us to a warmer response and richer activities. Its eternal antipathy is eternal sympathy. God works for us and with us and in us, and therefore always *against* us, in a helpful hostility whose opposition inspires us more than the allurements of any mere easy friendship, that surrenders without a struggle. He “*resisteth the proud.*” We want no open and idle Capua. Some sort of resistance seems indispensable for any upward fruitful progress. Unless difficulties and dangers are being constantly faced and overcome, there can be no good and lasting growth. Development arises out of friction and

denial. Children, that do not keep daily falling and fighting with their environment and measuring themselves against odds, and educating themselves by repeated failures, would remain children to the end. They would grow downwards in body and mind, or remain starved and stunted, without the defeats that lead to victory. Nature Calvinizes, and her election is as sure as it is universal. But then all are her favourites, and she admits neither waste nor disappointment in the evolution of which ages tell the moments. She reckons no by-products and no failures, because it is just these that out of their very superfluousness and inefficiency prepare the final triumph. Rubbish not only goes into the foundation but makes the foundation, and so it negates itself and ceases to be rubbish. No battle was ever fought without apparent ruin and loss and recoil in some direction. But this is just the cosmic process. The strife here can have no end, for issue opens out of issue on and on for ever. Nature makes no mistakes, but she is always trying Divine experiments and presenting a new armed front of antagonism. How can Beauty and Goodness and Truth unfold or even state themselves, except by way of contrast and through the shock of collision? Our earth, our hearts, our souls, constitute the battleground, on which they fight out their quarrels with Ugliness and Evil and Falsehood at our expense. But the good news they bring us from the better land, is purchased cheaply at any price. *Ubi discordia ibi concordia ac ibi Deus.* Could the gifts of God be bestowed otherwise,

acquired at no cost; attained with no conflict, they would be valueless and no gifts at all. Nay, they would be curses. The fall repeats itself in every life and proves by Divine Grace an upward and not a downward fall. And the sentence of death has become the sentence of life, "*In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread.*"

Religion and Science, the ethical and the cosmic process, stand only in antithesis, as they must always stand, to be embraced in a supreme synthesis. Their disagreement is productive of light. Faith and reason, faith and sight, faith and works, faith and fear or doubt—thus do we elicit, from their fruitful opposition, knowledge and righteousness and peace. That, for which we pay nothing, is worth nothing. We give little and we get little, but we sow in tears and we reap in joy. Body and soul contend for the mastery in order some day to be subsumed in a glorious reconciliation, and to expand again for yet more fertile rivalries. Matter and force merge in ether, to return in fresh life. No fact, no truth, can possess a single aspect, everything is bifacial—just as no plate has one side, and no stick one end alone. Competition passes into co-operation, and was co-operative from the very first. But an eternal selection of the fittest emerges from the struggle till all at last is fittest and has fulfilled its purpose and can be carried up and on to bigger stages. Ormuzd and Ahriman express a sublime principle which operates alike in souls and ions and systems. God asks of us nothing that He has not imposed on Himself.

The battle is the Lord's and was His from the first, and will be to all eternity. Love whets the sword first on itself, and blunts the edge and point there and thus, before turning it against us. Nor could God be Love, if He had not felt the sword, or if He had not proved His care for us by letting it fall on our heads, and becoming our gracious Adversary.

The one primal passion, the one universal force below all other forces, the instinct or appetite ever behind the desire of self-preservation, is that of self-assertion. This explains every process. The sense of resistance, which synchronises with the first flicker of self-consciousness, when subject is revealed (not as added to or in conjunction with but) as pitted *against* object, means the initial discovery that we enter on a world of war and are armed and equipped for ceaseless military service. We feel at the outset a longing to accept the challenge. The resistance we meet calls forth whatever is best in us, evokes our powers and faculties, and strictly educates us. No other method seems equal to produce the splendid and spacious results that are produced thereby. The first thing a healthy, happy, thriving baby does, is to fight and pull in pieces objects within his reach. Mother and nurse prove this in their own persons by abundant experience. Thoughtless people set this combative attitude down to pure wantonness, mere mischief or love of destruction for destruction's sake, or it is put down to inherent original sin. This is utterly absurd. The child knows better, recognizes he is a soldier in a world militant, bravely and



proudly accepts the situation, begins to define his position and trace the exact lines of his limitations. At first, of course, everything seems more or less an enemy and its attitude as hostile. Gradually a perception of agreement reinforces the perception of difference, but to the end of life the perception of difference is the ruling motive, as it should be, the peace is armed and the neutrality not only vigilant but aggressive. With adults the aboriginal instinct remains, the aptitude and love for conflict. Nobody cares even for pleasures that offer no obstacles to be overcome, cheap and easy amusements soon go the way of all cheap and easy pursuits. We are born into a fighting world, to fight our path of progress through it and over it towards something higher and better, that we dimly apprehend beyond.

“Eternal process moving on,  
From state to state the spirit walks.”

And the walk maintains and manifests itself as a crusade.

It is not Englishmen alone that court dangers, and seek overwhelming odds, and run a thousand unnecessary risks. No distinction in kind lies here, but simply in degree. We, all of us, if not in equal measure, think that life were not worth living without a considerable infusion and confusion of peril. The stiffer the fences to be crossed, the more we like them. We reckon existence, not by its dull days but by the eventful days, when all appeared lost and all was therefore won. The story in *Punch* of the bridal pair on their honeymoon, at the

end of their resources, expresses a profound philosophic truth. “O, that some friend would turn up,” sighed Angelina! “Or even some enemy,” murmured Edwin! Human nature is bellicose and must be and ought to be. The budding-point in the plant takes place at some spot of arrested growth, where the plant has to fight for itself and in the antagonism confronted and conquered evolves the final flower. A quarrelsome temper may be troublesome and go too far, it may and will encroach on the rights and liberties of others, but it is better to boil over than not to boil at all. The quick, angry answer, the hasty blow, no doubt are survivals of savagery, but in their very excess they demonstrate more admirably the constitutional and needful pugnacity of man, the vital self-assertion which declares at the same time his passionate desire and determination for self-preservation at any cost.

But so far we have been considering chiefly a state of Nature, and we have yet to consider the state of Grace, when the soul has passed from the sense of a general relationship towards God to a special and private and personal relationship. Here the sense of resistance continues, but the self-assertion is realised in self-denial and self-sacrifice. The Cross of Christ becomes the supreme and ultimate test for each of us. No other, no lesser criterion, now can be accepted or feel acceptable. The conflict abides, the armour must be worn, and we fight on still to the bitter blessed end, but a change has come over the spirit of the strife. We wage war

yet against the "world"—a compendious expression for the evil without us, against the "flesh"—a compendious expression for the evil within us, and against the devil or the organized and accumulated evil that works through both. God goes on revealing Himself as the Friendly Foe, who could not be the immanent God and with us and in us always, unless He were beautifully and helpfully and happily *against* us, to quicken old healthy energies and bring new powers into play and productive service. As our Divine Adversary, Love touches us at our most human point. In the Garden of Gethsemane and the Agony, when Christ asked for the cup of woe to be removed and then refused the relief in submission to the Father's Will, and again upon the Cross of Calvary when He cried, "*My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?*"—He confessed the solemn truth we are discussing. The best gifts come to us in denials, the finest assistance in opposition. True character, lasting graces, emerge out of the fiery ordeal and are wrung from the icy grip of the grave. "*Awake, O north wind! And come, thou south! Blow upon My garden, that the spices thereof may flow out.*" We should expect this teaching in the New Testament, which is philosophy teaching by example and the sole true history, but it speaks with clear trumpet tones in the Old Testament from the first page to the last. The milk and honey of Canaan had to be paid for to the uttermost farthing, by the burdens and bondage of Egypt and the plagues, and the iron experiences of the wilderness through which a nation of emanci-

pated slaves was shaken and shaped into a nation of heroes and martyrs and poets. "*Neither will I offer . . . unto the Lord my God of that which cost me nothing!*" Even when Shelley talked of "the infinite malice of destiny," not perhaps too seriously, he had a glimmer of the great fact and was unconsciously giving his testimony to the Christianity which he professed to despise. He recognised in those words something of the contrariety of things, and the Cross on which we must be crucified to be masters of ourselves, because thus the servants of Christ in newness of life. But the record of Israel is repeated every day in every life. There were giants in those days, and there arise giants still to contest every inch of the way. Anakim inside us, and Anakim outside us abound. Goliath yet says, "*Choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me.*" Even when Jordan has been passed, Jericho walled up to the sky and darkening the sun with its "battlements and bartisans" bestrides the road, and must be levelled with the dust, before we can call our own the Pleasant Land. There, too, fresh adversaries lie in wait for us, seeking to resist us so that the sword once drawn can never more be sheathed. But if it be "*bathed in Heaven*" we need fear no enemy. "*If ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you . . . those which ye let remain of them shall be pricks in your eyes and thorns in your sides, and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell.*" Yes, the "Pilgrim's Progress" must be also the "Holy War." Grace, like Nature, through all its steps and stages, with all

new "shoots of everlastingness," works by the law of antagonism. We see, we hear, we feel the challenge of foes around us and everywhere and that of the traitor in the camp, and we have no choice but to go forth with the shield of faith and the sword of the Spirit and fight to the death. Each fresh upward station of the Cross is a battle-ground, gained by loss. Evil personifies itself in some new form day by day, and frequently approaches us in the garb of piety like the "Holy Satan." And when "*transformed into an angel of light*" he becomes doubly dangerous.

Individualism, a salient factor or element of the cosmos, is then at once our strength and our weakness, our opportunity and our extremity. On the one hand we stand alone, and on the other hand all helpful forces of the universe that make for righteousness lie behind us and within us. Each Christian, though he fights single-handed, has the strength of all. God is "*the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.*" And the Master, who said, by His angel, "*Tell His disciples and Peter,*" entrenches Himself in our infirmities. For the individual in resisting the cosmos, and the cosmos in denying the individual, define and aid each other, and they would possess no meaning apart. Evil attacks man *qua* individual, not as a member of a church or a community or a part of Nature. And this vulnerable side, as it appears, through incorporation with Christ is invulnerable. Out of weakness we are made strong. Each individual acquires the power of every other individual

in and through this mystical union. Christ reveals Himself in the religious conflict as the Eternal Plus, and Evil resolves itself into the Eternal Minus. Spiritual progress is an ascending transvaluation of life. We pass, fighting, from grace to grace and from glory to glory. Evil embraced depreciates our vital coin, evil resisted and overcome appreciates it. And so the struggle proceeds for ever. Even the eddies of reaction only in the end swell the volume and increase the strength of the main current. The cosmic movement cannot be checked by idle bubbles or empty backwash.

*"Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."* Yes, we have all read this passage and probably accepted it without much reflection. Yet we must take this text in connection with our Lord's own express teaching upon which Tolstoy has built up his imposing superstructure of consecrated fatalism. *"But I say unto you that ye resist not evil."* We may well pause for a moment and wonder how many gorgeous fabrics have been erected upon some mere metaphor or mistranslated sentence or misunderstanding. And the great Russian Quietist has raised his Utopia above the flimsiest of foundations. By scholars and thinkers and theologians, the matter does not require discussion, but the appeal in these days is to the man in the street. And the words, read with the context, can only mean, *"Resist not the evil man,"* in "the evil man's" own way and with "the evil man's" own weapons, *i.e.*, of fraud and force. That we at the present day in a Christian community should even tamely submit

to wanton encroachments, and so by our cowardice imperil the person and property of others, as well as our own, Christ never contemplated and never could have contemplated. This would indeed have amounted to an indirect encouragement of evil. And how could our Lord, who was always opposing wickedness in every shape, have possibly connived at its success and stultified Himself and His preaching? He founded the Church Militant, and was and is our Captain. We dare not put a premium upon evil, by silently condoning its offences. At the same time it may be freely admitted, a passive attitude of patience and endurance was often the only course open to the Apostles.

No church can prosper that is not a missionary and a martyr church. Conflict was ever the breath of life and the promise of victory for the faith. Of course we have no Inquisition now, no religion propagated by the faggot or the gibbet, and S. Bartholomew's day and massacre are not likely to repeat themselves. But persecution of a kind there will be and must be, if the light is to shine and the truth to spread. Ignorance, superstition, bigotry, still flourish and have grown polite and pious if not civilized at heart. They stab now but with slander, and they wear white kid gloves and a charming smile. The poison in our time does not hide itself in a convenient glass of wine or cup of chocolate, but contaminates the springs of learning at which we drink. Decorum has gone abroad, and fashion forbids overt violence, but takes the libeller to its bosom and showers its sugar plums

and favours upon him. And after all, no murder can ever be quite so bad as the destruction of character, though done in a dainty drawing room by golden insolence or lisped gently out by rose red lips. Those who contend for the truth, and care for nothing but the truth, who refuse to label themselves by party names and prefer principle to mere worldly achievements or popularity, will have fighting enough. But they remain in the majority, however few in number, because they are on the side of progress and eternal facts, and they know that lasting progress was never accomplished except by antagonism and under the Cross of Christ.



### III

## THE SWORD OF THE GOSPEL

IN the sublime message of mercy, appealing intimately to our love and faith, one side of the Gospel proclamation has been exaggerated and exalted at the expense of the other. "*Good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people—on earth peace, good-will toward men*"—a child can understand this. But it contains only half the truth. And unless we see the revelation whole it will be no real revelation, and it may merely lead us astray into some pet heresy masquerading under the disguise of a severe orthodoxy. Christ certainly came with the olive branch, but He brought also the Sword. "*Think not that I am come to send peace on earth : I came not to send peace but a Sword.*" We—many, perhaps most of us—prefer to overlook this disagreeable fact, and fix our eyes and feast our hearts on what appears so much more pleasant and palatable. That is to say, we like cheap and easy ways, or short cuts to the end desired. But, to be honest with ourselves, salvation has never been offered on these terms. The Sword that guards the gate of Paradise, after the expulsion of Adam and Eve, guards it still. But now it is held

by the Gospel and not by the Law. We must all pass under it, we must all submit to it, as even the Blessed Virgin did—“*yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also*”—though it has been stript of its chief terrors. It no longer comes simply as a Sword of condemnation and death, but to winnow and separate. “*For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged Sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a-discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*” The meaning seems plain enough. We are clearly taught, the office of the Cross, under the figure of the Sword, is to draw us by division into a closer unity. Wherever it speaks or moves or acts, it operates automatically, so to speak, and by its very presence protests against evil and encourages good. It pronounces judgment immediately, by the simple constitution of its character, and sets the two kingdoms, the two natures, the two camps, over against each other in fruitful rivalry, and endless antagonism. It cannot indeed be otherwise. The Sword falls as a crucial test, and compels us to fight even if unconsciously and ignorantly, and decide one way or the other between right and wrong and truth and falsehood and the just and the unjust. In the secret soul of the individual, in the bosom of society, in the counsels of the senate, in the course of history, it pursues its silent and irresistible work. Yes, and the very men and women who reject the Gospel and follow some fancy religion of their own, are often those most influenced

by its action. We are aware or may easily be beware in consciousness, how our thoughts and feelings, our motives and wishes, inevitably group themselves into armed opposition. Thereby we confess, if we do not recognise, the piercing of the Cross and the rending of the Sword. We need not deny that Christianity in a sense existed before Christ. We read of Moses, "*esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt.*" But, however this may be, none can reasonably deny, that what was only implicit in the Old Testament became explicit in the New Testament. While admitting the retrospective energy of the Cross, and the fact that all great events must necessarily be prepared for and thus cast the shadows of their coming before they do come on susceptible persons and periods, it is absolutely certain that the Cross could not manifest its whole force until Christ had lived and died and risen again. And since the Incarnation and the Atonement and the Resurrection and the preaching of the Gospel, we have been lifted up in humanity and yet above humanity on to a higher plane of thought and being. The moral axis, the mental axis of the world, has been changed. Everything now is spiritualized, everything is sacramental. We see holy symbols in the dust that has been quickened for all time by the open (not the empty) Grave of Christ. If we only analysed in the most careless manner our simplest processes of thought, we should be stupefied at the discovery that we cannot keep ourselves now from thinking in terms of the Cross. Our

very syllogisms become little Calvaries. Our predicates may sound worldly and be clogged with the miry clay of earth, our premisses may be Agnostic or Atheist, but these when honestly examined will betray the presence of other elements and the colour and mould of the Cross. Language, in metaphor and simile and etymology, witnesses to the truth and is a living tomb from which the Saviour keeps perpetually arising. And history, though falsified and cut into fancy shapes by cunning theorists with a purpose, jealously guards the truth.

The present age seems in danger of forgetting one solemn fact, one of the foundation stones on which the Gospel builds up the new Church—namely, Repentance. We like to confess other persons' sins, our neighbours' faults or our country's wickedness, and pre-eminently that of the political party to which we do *not* belong, but we do not like to confess our own. Yet we will believe anything if need be and under sufficient pressure of evidence or prejudice—especially prejudice. The consequence is a new efflorescence of Pharisaism, a fashion of self-righteousness. People suppose the Sword of the Gospel has been sheathed, and in a Christian community, which in spite of occasional revivals in religion thinks at heart there is no need of any conversion except of stock and on the money market, the idea of Repentance is preposterous. But though the idea may be neither acknowledged nor honoured, the chief offenders who repudiate its hold yet by repeated changes of conduct bear wit-

ness to the fact in their lives. They blindly feel the operation of the Sword, constantly putting before them the antagonism of things and saying faintly to the Christian conscience, "*Choose you this day whom ye will serve,*" "*come out from them, and be ye separate.*" We talk of the perverseness of people and the irony of events, and it is at such moments that our testimony is given, and it is then we are compelled to fight against our will with the adverse forces. A new policy, a new investment even, may be directly or indirectly a proof, however small, of the unceasing conflict and the Sword that guards the entrance into a state of peace and happiness.

Christianity has moralized the world and everything in it, and made infidelity appear respectable. For that too preaches, and cannot help itself, from a church pulpit, and it is the curve of this singular incongruity that produces an effect at once tragic and comic. We know not whether to laugh or weep, when the greatest anti-Christian minds coolly borrow the images of our faith, with which to refute that faith itself—unconscious of the inconsistency.

"Who would not laugh if such a man there be,  
Who would not weep if Atticus were he?"

The man who renounces his birthright, in the very act of renunciation accepts it, and could by no possibility do this unless he possessed it. The shadow of the Cross has added an ethical meaning to every fact of life, and to the most material.

Some thinkers have tried to exempt Art from the operation of this universal principle, but they have tried in vain. Why, even Science has been constrained again and again though with reluctant lips to bow before the conqueror, and by its very blasphemies to admit what it would not admit. "Art for Art's sake" never had such meaning. At the best, what is it but an identical proposition—that A is A or Art is Art? Of course, it must be autotelic and have an end and a character of its own. But he would be a bold man, who claimed for it but one side, and that the most obvious and least important. We see everything now in the light of the Cross, and beneath its Sword of judgment that divides instantaneously the good from the bad, the right from the wrong, and the false from the true. And so the picture or the statue stands before us moralised and spiritualised at once. We do not, we cannot contemplate either alone, as an abstract thing and in isolation. We must behold them through an ethical medium and an ethical reaction. They are in some relation to us as moral agents, and do not appeal to the mere artistic taste. They enter into the atmosphere which we breathe, and therefore partake of its tone and temper. The chalk sketch or caricature, scribbled by a child's hand on the dirty canvas of a common wall or gate, in its measure becomes a definite factor in morals. It teaches something, it conveys a message, it impresses us for better or worse, and though infinitesimally it connects itself with logical issues and cosmic processes. The drawing is not simply good or bad

as a work of art, it is also and inexorably good or bad from the highest point of view, as we see it and as it affects us spiritually. We feel the winnowing power within us, as we regard it with praise or blame, and go away from it discouraged by its decadence and pessimism, or encouraged by a glimpse of that eternal optimism which the Gospel reveals and inspires. Art, that rose from the sepulchre of pagan centuries with the Cross in its hand, refuses to be robbed of its privileges and to forget the Church, its mother, at whose sacramental breasts it first drew in the preciousness of life and light. *Ecce, ancilla Domini!* Over-didactic Art, obviously didactic Art, cannot be commended, but we may surely forgive its errors, as we forgive the innocent exposures of the ignorant child. But it may be added, that its message is incomplete unless it conveys a moral teaching, and makes us wish to be better than we are and makes us realise our own unworthiness. One ought to feel, before a work of art, as one would feel in the presence of a pure and beautiful woman or in some great cathedral, a conviction of personal sin and a hatred of evil. Art, under the Sword of the Gospel, while this unfolds the antithesis of right and wrong, invites us to repentance.

“*The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.*” This must not be interpreted in a superficial commonplace sense, as just meaning the bondage of the one agent and the liberty of the other. The passage may indeed bear such an explanation, but it implies a great deal more and a very profound truth. It is the office of the “letter” to kill by

convicting us of sin. The law leads us to Christ through the gates of the grave, and the corruption in us must be slain before we can live. And the "killing" must always precede the "quickenings." For the Spirit uses the "letter" of the law, that by breaking on it we may be made whole in Christ who fulfilled it and satisfied it. And when St. Paul said, "*I die daily*," he intended us to understand that he recognized the office of the "letter," and the necessity of continual confession and continual repentance at the foot of the Cross and in the completeness of the Eternal Sacrifice. But now we are starved with a mutilated Gospel, in an age that hurries to be rich and hurries to be religious and demands the best bargain, by giving as little and getting as much as possible. We say we are sinners and sing the fact to solemn music in ornate services, but we do not believe a word we say. We object to the sifting pain, and the separating ordeal. And we determine to have a *maximum* of devotion at a *minimum* of expense. Why should our feelings be needlessly harrowed by the reality of repentance, when the appearance passes as good coin though it is but a miserable counterfeit? And yet if we would just fairly face the truth that the Sword of the Gospel still does its work in us and with us, whether we know it or not, whether we accept it or not, because the Blood of the Cross is now the life of the world and we are saturated with its virtues, we shall see how much better it is to be consciously and willingly in the order of things. Let us resist evil by all means, but let us not resist good,



“*lest haply*” we “*be found to fight against God.*” The daily practice of repentance is the best way in which we can carry on the Holy War within us and equip ourselves for the campaign outside us. It enables us as no other method will, to discern the rift (so to speak) which runs through the cosmos, by which right and wrong are eternally antagonized, and a vaster spiritual synthesis evolves itself. Ours we find is a party world, with a party government, inherent alike in mind and matter, and we must take sides, because we are always both sides, and only by opposition and counter-opposition, by action and reaction, do we grow intellectually and religiously and attain to higher results. And unless our nature were so divided we could never reach the fullest unity.

Yes, the Cross divides to unite by a Divine antithesis. And but for the division there could be no real ultimate reconciliation of progress within us or without. But if God’s rule proceeds by complementary factors that through their very clashing consummate and fructify things and attain to a loftier and larger issue, by altruism and egoism, by optimism and pessimism, by correlatives and correspondences than in denying each other affirm a principle that embraces both, we should antecedently expect to find breaches or gaps everywhere in the world of mind and in the world of matter. And this is exactly what we do discover. Continuity stands for ever confronted by Discontinuity, order by disorder, rules by exceptions. Indeed, we might almost reverse the old dictum and say, *Natura non*

*nisi per saltum progreditur.* Some day these faults or flaws, these gulfs, will be bridged over by some wider conception, and we shall prove a periodicity in time and a regular irregularity, and the miracles will not seem interruptions but supplements of Nature. Evolution must be eventually explained in terms of its contrast Revolution.

*E tenebris lux.* A pre-established harmony will arise out of the eternal battle between conflicting principles. There is a leap across a chasm to language, from inarticulate sounds to articulate words, a leap across a chasm to reason, and a leap across a chasm to morality—from inanimate to animate, from physical to psychical, and from mechanism to mentality. No doubt, the interval between matter and mind tends to contract, but the void as it appears will remain like the dark lines in the *spectrum*, not because it is so empty, but because it is so full of meaning and packed with infinite possibilities. Yet faith takes the leap without a pause, and in the integrating flash of a cosmic intuition supplies the key or clue to the insoluble problem, which it could not do unless this were what we call insoluble. Mysteries are its proper food, and but few remain. Even chance now is amenable to law. But we may hazard the conjecture, that, after an impartial survey of the cosmos, it does look as if rooted in its very framework resided a fundamental contradiction of things—positive and negative poles. And here we trace a fatal error of Theology, in its mere denunciation of “nature” as opposed to “grace.” No doubt, the opposition is real, but it is pro-

ductive. "Nature" so-called plays a very important and fruitful part in the development of the soul, nor can it be eradicated without abolishing humanity. God compels evil, which works through "nature" not to be a co-efficient but certainly to be a co-operative force in our amelioration, and out of its raw material evokes a new character and a new world in a vaster conception. It may be urged that, if we consider God as our Adversary we degrade Him to the level of Satan. But, in reply to this superficial contention, we may say that the Devil tempts us by enticing into sin and God only tempts us by trial. There are the precious enmities of Love, and the malignant enmities of Hatred. And if just now *lacunae* here and there abide unexplained, the inexplicable of to-day is the explicable of to-morrow. And if we knew a little more and could see a little further, we should find the *lacunae* all fitting in somehow and be able even to prophesy their recurrence, as we do the return of comets and eclipses, in mysteries still grander and more inexplicable to be again interpreted and subsumed in a superior synthesis.

We need never be afraid of logical conclusions. And the teaching of the more advanced mathematics tends to prove that any conception, however extreme or impossible it may seem, if consistent with itself and obedient to its own laws must be accepted as a fact of a kind and is eternally true as far as it goes. So the principle of unity in difference appears justified by the records of history and the reading of the human mind, and universal testi-

mony. *"For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy."* The present easy-going age wants to forget the Sword of the Gospel, and keep it shut up in the sheath of a vague and general tolerance or a feeble benevolence. Yet even the New Testament superabounds with the contrary doctrine. *"Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth."* He chasteneth *"for our profit, that we might be partakers of His Holiness."* And *"afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."* Here we have the discipline of the Sword, the need of daily confession of sin, daily repentance for sin, daily contrition, daily dying, in order that we may thus rise to a new and better life. *"If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me."* We have no necessity to multiply instances in support of our assertion. The Gospel, in the way of Nature as well as in the way of Grace, appeals to the psychological constitution of our minds, that sees things set over against each other in fertile antagonism, and must fight for salvation as it fights for everything else. The presence, the picture of the Cross with its Sword, suggests and invites the everlasting contest between good and evil to which we are born and without which life would have no use and no meaning. Christ links Himself on to the order, that comes through and by disorder, and is justified in us and in His Church by the glorious harvest. We thence are kings and we are slaves,

but kings because we are slaves, to Him and to one another. We are priests and we are victims, but we could not be priests unless we were victims first. The virgin element in the cosmos, to which it perpetually returns to repair itself, repeats itself in every new heart and new life. And every soul born again means a baptism for the whole world and a fresh creation and not merely in metaphor. The Sword of the Spirit keeps reaping still. And no one has expressed the fact of conflict and the principle of the Gospel better than the greatest of the apostles who was also "*the least.*" "*By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report, as deceivers and yet true, as unknown and yet well-known, as dying and behold we live, as chastened and not killed, as sorrowful yet alway rejoicing, as poor yet making many rich, as having nothing and yet possessing all things.*" "The earth," says the Haggada, "shook and trembled and would not find rest, until God created Repentance—then it stood fast."

But it stands fast alone in the strength of eternal conflict and Divine instability, through which God walks as Christ of old walked on the stormy waters bringing Peace. "*Benedictus Dominus Deus meus: Qui docet manus meas ad prælium et digitos meos ad bellum.*"

## IV

### COSMOS AND GOSPEL

WE find the cosmic process given in the Gospel scheme. The economy of Grace, the system of Salvation, makes this immense assumption throughout from the very starting point, and out to the uttermost divagations in remote corollaries, and can only be interpreted in terms of fundamental antagonism, absorbed and explained in a higher unity. It is St. Paul's supreme and constant text, and the topic of his most sublime speculations. And the simplest and plainest preaching, from the Epi-Christian age down to our own, whatever its shortcomings and however feeble its philosophy, has grasped even through the thick darkness this tremendous fact. "*Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life.*" The perpetual war between the subject and the object, the external and the internal, the greater and the less, the flesh and the spirit, the church and the world, was recognised in practice if not always understood in principle. It has been too often rashly assumed that Science and Religion, Progress and Faith, are entirely antipathetic. No doubt, ultimate truth can only be evolved by this endless opposition, and yet the

machinery at the heart of each appears to be identical. Science realizes itself, by being eternally divided against itself, through the interrogation of Nature. Religion realizes itself by being eternally divided against itself, in the interrogation of Grace. Errors thus are resolved into approximations to fact, and partial verities into more complete verities. For no statement is or ever can be final.

The slightest consideration should have led thinkers to suspect a common character, common postulates, common operations, in the two worlds so utterly at variance and yet so utterly and intimately one. The unit of knowledge in Science and in Philosophy, is subject *contra* object, and the unit of Religion is subject *contra* object. And in both spheres we ascend step by step, stage by stage, through the collision of repugnant elements to new conceptions and larger reconciliations. There could be no doubt except for faith. It is the faith behind the doubt that gives it any virtue or vitality. And it may be urged with equal force, *vice versa*, there could be no faith except for doubt. It is the doubt within the faith, that renders the faith creative and encroaching, and conducts it by countless revisions and readjustments to something vaster and stronger still. The one implies and suggests the other. They work together, by working in opposition. through an infinitely fruitful interaction, and it is impossible to imagine any useful or solid results without. "*Fight the good fight of faith.*" It is a cosmic process, and a principle of Grace, by which we continually restate our premisses and reformu-

late our theories and advance slowly by every disputed fact. The pathway of Progress lies across the Campo Santo of imperfect creeds and beautiful yet buried superstitions. Faith keeps affirming and accepting dogma after dogma, and doubt moves *pari passu* for ever refusing and denying them, and by the unceasing contest fresh inspirations flash out like fire and new revelations build up a new heaven and earth for society, till the old crystallizing period begins again and again a scornful scepticism compels inquiry and reconstruction. An uncritical belief is a doomed belief, a dying belief, even a dead belief, that contained in it from the first the seed of its own eventual dissolution. The conservative part of us dislikes the judicial spirit and resents its action, when it weighs effects and doctrines in its balances and finds them wanting. The writing on the wall disturbs the easy-going arm chair Christianity, when it only asks for peace and quietness, in pious ignorance that they are only the peace and quietness of the grave and the worms of corruption have already commenced to crawl and devour. *Mene, mene, tekel, upharsin!* Like the Persian assault, free inquiry, the one best friend of truth, subverts established relations and overthrows the ancient vested interests. And yet we ought to be grateful for the Higher Criticism. It has merely given the Bible a fresh and longer lease of life, and set Christianity upon a firmer basis. The road to Heaven will be found ultimately paved with the bones of the Higher Critics, and the geography mainly German to the very door. The learned artil-



lery of cultivated doubt has perhaps undermined a few trembling tenets and obsolete outworks, but the apparent loss is real gain and the citadel remains strong as ever and inexpugnable. Faith does not demand or require the aid of the Ephesian mob. Better by far the open attacks of educated doubt, than the fatal defence of ignorance and bigotry. From its very nature, as a fighting religion, the Gospel invites the fullest inquiry, and only thus can it ascertain its weak points and unguarded aspects. A doctrine, that is but at the utmost a splendid infirmity, though dressed in royal robes and supported by the conspiracy of centuries, must give its place and crown to the humblest truth. King Cophetua chose the beggar maid.

The truths which correspond to the Death and Resurrection of Christ are eternal acts, and possess a continuous efficacy. He was "*the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*" In a metaphysical sense Christianity was nothing new, or it would not have been true. The verity, of which the Cross is our sacred symbol, was from everlasting and will be to everlasting. History gives no uncertain testimony to the endless antagonism of light and darkness, the imperfect and the relatively perfect idea, as civilization unfolded itself in a religious atmosphere. We have competing facts and fancies, contending illusions and feelings, each succeeding battle issuing in mighty products of thought to be soon in their turn yet mightier problems. *Quod erat demonstrandum* we say. And, before the echo of the confident words has fully died away,

the proof which could only be effective for a period is disproved, and the eternal enigma presents itself to be stated and solved again in some novel culture or creed, some solemn institution with its immortality of a passing moment in the never-ceasing cosmic process. Anaxagoras or Archimedes cried "Eureka," and the very shout of triumph shows the hour has gone, and different conditions clamour imperiously for different interpretations. Ποῦ στῶ we ask, but the *locus standi* when discovered only becomes a *locus movendi*. Subject *contra* object, grows into subject *versus* object, and then subject *plus* object, in a superior generalization of disagreements that agree to divide and evolve richer fruits. We start with the family or tribe against the individual, then in a more complex social synthesis we see the individual against the community and asserting his rights with a passionate prominence, and now we have once more the State against the individual and claiming more and conceding less. Each fresh stage of development has been achieved by the conflict of rival forces, by giving and taking and through gain and loss. In every upward and onward movement we may note after the temporary clash of struggling elements a certain fusion and ascent in a wider principle. The individual and the community are now at war, and years or centuries hence we shall have a kind of Christian Socialism, in which the private person will be merged to rediscover himself in a fuller form. Surrender of particular rights in the end emerges as the acquisition of finer powers and fuller interests.

The sacrifice of the one is the benefit and liberty of all, and in turn and inexorably the sacrifice of all is the benefit and liberty of the one. Labour and capital, classes and masses, ability and disability, antagonize each other and keep perpetually changing their fronts to re-appear in other and broader shapes. Privilege or monopoly first held the field, the few against the many, the rulers against the slaves. From ages of discussion and strife, reformation and revolution tardily wrung the conception of rights. Equality and inequality, feudalism and freedom, opportunity and unenfranchisement, quarrelled and shed blood in rivers till the charters arrived at last bestowed by the benediction of the Cross. And now we have among us the action and counteraction of Conformity and Nonconformity, representing modern statements of eternal opposition and the mind divided against itself in order to understand and realize itself. And yet, no sooner has the Nonconformist defined his position and seceded into his camp of "passive resistance" than he ceases to be a Nonconformist and becomes *ipso facto* a bigoted Conformist and pillar of his Establishment. And, as the warfare proceeds, he grows into something higher and better and more liberal, though without any renunciation of the party name in his mental outlook and practice. So with the nominal Conformist, in accepting his limitations he already sees farther ahead and has stepped across them into a region beyond all external bounds and rites. Both Conformist and Nonconformist, in the very act of self-definition, trans-



cended their respective fixed points of view, and could not indeed justify themselves or their beliefs unless they did so. This psychological necessity arises from the presence and influence of the Cross as the dominating factor in life. Christ, whether known or unknown, rejected or received, operates thus by the inherent antagonism of thoughts and things. And where His Spirit breathes and moves and works, and His Spirit energises everywhere, we meet the radical antithesis, the armies of good and evil, greater benefit and less benefit, advance and retrogression, confronting each other on a thousand Calvaries and crucifying Christ again for new atonements and new resurrections, for new ascensions and new Pentecosts. History repeats itself—yes, but never on exactly the same plane, and never in precisely the same manner. For past and present and future are all one, each may be expressed in the terms of the other two. And still “*non pendebit semper inter latrones Christus, resurget aliquando crucifixa veritas.*”

If we can ask any transcendental questions, that postulate or presume a higher synthesis, how shall we explain this? Here is a fact like any other fact of consciousness or experience, that must fall into some sort of order and come under some kind of category. The very questions imply a logical correspondence, an organic connexion, and as soon as they are stated they cease to be transcendental and are overcome and rise into a larger union. Whatever we see clearly must be true for the individual on his particular plane of existence at any rate and

true for his society in so far as he reacts upon it in that direction. Increased knowledge means increased light, and light is a solvent. It breaks down old systems, and from the ruins and deeps of disintegration it builds up new systems. Illuminated learning in its turn and time, by its antagonism to fresh discoveries that open out still wider horizons and avenues of thought, passes inevitably under the eclipse of age and decay and is once more resolved into a statelier and stronger form. The glorious errors or fancies or visions of yesterday, are the commonplaces of to-day. The wildest romance soon grows into a working reality and daily practical procedure. The preposterous absurdities of to-day will be the current coin of to-morrow, and the contemporary philosopher or his theory will be a toy for his grandchildren to play with. The impossible Utopia of Home Rulers and Idealists is merely preparing a bed on which the man in the street may lie. Facts every moment prove stronger than fiction. The mathematician's heaven in its most subtle and curious extension, is sure to be surpassed by more cunning solutions, as he goes from infinity to infinity.

No conception can transcend in the regions of imagination the evolutions of fact. St. Paul's great doctrine of Obedience anticipates Modern Science. *"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the Truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love."* Here we have religious enlightenment by a process of purging, or the contention of opposites, through discipline and the acceptance of conditions.

"*Natura vincitur parendo.*" Again, the Apostle declares "*obedience*" is "*unto righteousness.*" The fight of faith issues in the annexation of fresh and fairer territories for the support of the soul. No height, no good thing, stands outside or above the reach of a militant love and hope and trust. Obedience means conformity to the given conditions. Each acceptance involves a proportionate gain and a religious growth. We rise from heaven to heaven, from harmony to harmony, through obedience unto obedience. Byron finely expresses it, in his perfect picture of the gladiator's death :—

"Consents to death, but conquers agony."

Submission to the strife is victory over the strife, and a loftier stage acquired to be surmounted itself when outworn. God Himself recognizes and embraces the limits which He imposes upon us. "*Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered.*" That makes the problem of innocent suffering comparatively easy, in the light of Christ's Cross and the consequent solidarity of the human race. Fight by obedience, by yielding cheerfully to the yoke of the law laid down, and engrained in the very vital constitution and organic meaning and mystery of the whole cosmos. There is one Leader, and the soldier follows Him and thus in his part and place and time learns how to govern or command. Obedience necessarily implies in its very act a new and higher synthesis. Discordant elements are reconciled at last, through a belligerent process of purification, and unite to form by conquest on the one

hand and by captivity on the other hand a nobler attitude and a larger prospect. The most outrageous errors and excesses, abuses and adulterations, fused in the crucible of criticism, make materials for further advances and reappear transfigured in a grander truth. Nothing is or can be wasted, if all is rightly considered. Nature must be economical, and the apparent spendthrift proves on re-examination to be but a jealous miser seeking for new and richer investments, though the action may seem at first sight circuitous and extravagant. A severe parsimony really regulates the treatment of what seems superficially mere slag and refuse, and from the rubbish of discarded by-products come jewels of thought and greater powers for our service. And we can only remain in the fundamental order by being against it, and obey by disobeying. The world perpetually defies us, and challenges us to the contest, till we overcome it by accepting its terms and laws, that we may use them as our servants and extend them at last in other and even contrary directions. By capitulation to the conditions we find, we subdue them to be our instruments. The sword of meekness, sharpened on defeats, proves in the end irresistible. The dyer's hand takes the colour of the material but yet he makes the material what he will. We learn by failure, we rise by falling.

In the commercial world, we find increasingly the spectacle of combination arrayed against combination, the employers against the employed, and continually re-adjusted relations in the promotion of

trade. This is as it should be, and as it always will be. In the organic system of Society, each member of the body only does his duty and fulfils his part and produces the proper amount of work by competing and therefore co-operating with every other. The oscillating balance between the different members maintains the health of each one and the life of the whole community. Where we meet an unfair predominance either of the employers or the employed, we discover a diseased organism which can only recover its rights and tone by some fundamental disturbance. We have to choose between evolution and revolution. In trade at the present time we can discern a steady movement upwards towards a new synthesis, in which again the new elements will antagonise each other and rise to a yet fuller development. The individual tends to become a kind of collective man, and the collective man will then be re-individualised to undergo the same process once more. We have a rhythmical recurrence, but always on a higher and higher plane. Teuton and Celt, to take a larger field, Scandinavian and Slav, old world and new world, mother country and colony, North and South, Occidental and Oriental, all possess different ideals, aspirations, theories and conducts of life. Their hopes and fears and ambitions seem diametrically opposed. We see work arrayed against rest, the useful condemning the beautiful, the energy confronting fatalism, aggression conquering indifference. Turk and American divided by centuries and irreconcilable interests stand at daggers drawn



—*digladiantur*. To the Buddhist life hereafter, immortality, is neither desired nor desirable—it appears to him an unmitigated curse. Not merely are peoples divided by continents and oceans, by mountains and deserts, but by racial instincts and ingrained antipathies. The conflict of nationalities is a real one, because the idea is as real as that of empire philosophically false and unmeaning. Artificial distinctions only suit artificial periods. For

“Bright and fierce and fickle is the South,  
And dark and true and tender is the North.”

What will be the final outcome of contending races, nobody can guess. But, to judge by analogy, the white and the brown and the yellow and the red and the black will draw nearer and nearer to each other, acting and re-acting on each other, giving to and taking from each other, and slowly improving each other, never quite losing all their differences while growing into fairer types. We may perhaps at last arrive at a supreme synthesis of United States of all the continents, held by the attachment of their very disunited qualities. Thus the cosmic process continues, while Jewish separation meets Gentile fusion, expediency quarrels with principle, and precedent or prescription clashes with reason or argument, approaching in the end by some celestial casuistry to some fresh transcendent compromise. Everything seems at once autotelic and heterotelic, self-regarding and self-ending because other-regarding and other-ending. Automata do not and cannot exist, and mechanism interprets nothing and not even itself. Christianity

is the final explanation of life through death, and its instrument Antagonism (the Cross) an education that prepares the soul for the reception of God and ushers us into His Presence. The person widens through contact with the supreme Divine Personality. Character, or the individual will, working in a definite direction through and against the indefinite, grows by constant warfare. Religion introduces us to ourselves in God, through morality its raw material. We cannot logically stop at man as the ultimate *terminus a quo* and *ad quem*. We must travel further still, to find the longest way about the shortest way home. Even the useful amoeba and convenient protoplasm or bathybius need not arrest us long. We trace antagonism in the very *incunabula* of animals and even plants, and where we trace antagonism we trace also rudimentary ethics. The lowliest vegetation, that rejects the evil and accepts and assimilates the good, though but by way of nutriment, displays the dawn of a moral sense which discriminates between competing alternatives, the right and the wrong. Egotistic man wants to keep God and Heaven and Free Will and Immortality all to himself, and to close with the false issue of dead matter which we meet nowhere. Animals can make out a respectable claim to share in his monopoly. In the first (if there ever was a first) response of so-called matter to its environment, and a preference exhibited in the selection of one object out of many, religion begins. Mind has been called educated matter, but is not matter rather uneducated mind? And yet we do matter grave

injustice by saying so much or rather so little, for its potentialities appear to be absolutely infinite. Heaven is first material and local, then universal and spiritual; first a place, then a point of view; first a *locus* and then the *focus* of everything. And hell can only be its opposite, the damnation of refused conditions, the endless torment of death that chooses to die and not to live. Sin is negation that remains negation, and declines to return to the positive. It rejects Christ, revealing Himself by the Cross as the Reconciler of all differences, and the connecting-point of all possible and impossible relations, in an ever-ascending revelation by withdrawal and progress by antagonism.

*“I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel . . . . I form the light and create darkness: I make peace and create evil: I the Lord do all these things.” “And God said, Let there be light, and there was Light.”*

We see the operation of this vast and vital law, progress by antagonism, through ten thousand varied manifestations. It confronts us everywhere, from the first Scriptural statement of it at the beginning of the Bible, in the action of the Divine Spirit on Chaos, while we read its enunciation in the blessing of the curse pronounced on man, *“I will put enmity between thee and the woman and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.”* We have a glimpse of it, or seem to have a glimpse of it, per-

haps, in cosmic and hyper-cosmic, inimical and yet not unfriendly inter-relations, that open a door to miracles or unrecognised laws. It meets us through the daily, hourly, momentarily conflict in our universal consciousness and experience of intelligence and feeling, issuing in a new balance which partakes of both intelligence and feeling, and yet is neither, because it carries up both on to a higher level, though feeling has always a tendency to predominate. We find it in the irreconcilable attitude of liberty and order or discipline, in the hostility between the ideas of private property and communism, whether articulate or inarticulate, in the interaction of Church and State and the last new phase of religious or irreligious decadence and common-sense, and the perpetual conflict of expediency and principle.

“The old order changeth, yielding place to new,  
And God fulfils Himself in many ways,  
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.”

## V

### THE GOOD FIGHT OF FAITH

THE art and science and literature of any given period will be found upon examination to present a clear family likeness, because they all work in a common medium and draw out of a common fund of ideas. Plagiarism does not enter here. Confronted by the same problems, baptized into the same spirit, we cannot but think in similar terms, locally or imperially, as the case may be and as the circumstances require. Nobody altogether escapes the tone of his environment which touches him at a thousand points, and everyone, more or less, must take the form and pressure of the age. Even the man of genius only sees a little farther than the others, and only feels the constraint of his conditions a little less. We all so far dance in fetters, but some dance with greater grace. And it is the bondage itself, that, by a pre-determined recoil, becomes our very freedom. Cast-iron customs, ideas that not only rule us but tyrannise over us, grow a grinding yoke and invite the response of an inevitable reaction. Thoughts and institutions go again into the great melting-pot of discussion or concussion, and re-appear in a new harmony of higher

forms and conceptions. Religion is certainly no exception to the universal rule, and perhaps more than anything else keeps demanding a new philosophy, expressing the colour and feeling of the time, to re-adjust its shape in accordance with the vital needs and new vision of hungry souls, that cannot live unless this is done.

Now the prevailing ideas of our own period seem obvious enough, and exhibit a curious conformity to no uncertain type. They are freedom or liberty, tolerance, charity, altruism, philanthropy, socialism, an open mind and an open door not merely to other people's property but to the Kingdom of Heaven. The public benefactor still may and does empty the contents of his neighbour's pockets into the alms-bag, in the greatness of his concern, but he also contributes something of his own. Leniency has become almost criminal in its regard for the alleged rights of the most depraved, and often would almost rather compound a felony than let the offender bear the appropriate penalty. We not only explain away the worst offences, and lay the *onus* on heredity, and the ancestral germ-plasm or the surroundings, but we even excuse them with a light heart. Science itself has its large credulities and generous superstitions, and will cheerfully re-open any question and shelter any craze that appeals to its unbrageous protection and approaches with the sweet sop of judicious flattery. It is easy then to see the menace of an invertebrate religion and a flabby multicellular morality. The temper that considers all faiths equally good and welcomes with effusion to

the hospitable shelter of its Pantheon any new god or creed, and only asks us to be earnest in something, runs a serious risk of relaxing the foundations on which all cults and ethics finally repose. Liberty tends to licence, forbearance to weakness, and kindness to the worst kind of cruelty, if it lays aside the rod of correction and rejects the knife, when only a severe surgical operation can save the patient's life.

What this century, that is so namby-pamby in spite of noble efforts, really and truly demands is a doctrine of definite contrasts in a more virile faith and a less visionary love. "*I am come,*" said Christ, "*to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household.*" Here we have a Divine forecast of the necessary antagonism involved in the Gospel, and the only manner in which it can operate with lasting effect. Decision is and must be in its particular area division. The choice may not always lie only between the good and the bad, but between the good and the better, or between the better and the best. "Not Lancelot nor another." "*Le meilleur est toujours l'ennemi du bien.*" Countless things are in themselves good and desirable, or for ourselves up to a certain point or for a certain time or in certain ways, or for others and not for us. The fact that they once were spiritual food or may eventually become spiritual food, does not make them so just now, "*I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.*" The law of accommodation

## 6) THE KEEPER OF THE KEYS

holds good everywhere. And unless the greater love casts out (not simply fear but) the lesser love, we shall never grow and shall remain intellectually and religiously children. Growth means gradual and perpetual revising of ideas, restatement of our predicates and re-adjustment to our conditions, or it means nothing. Endless conflict, between friendly no less than hostile forces, conducts us by an implacable logic to higher reconciliations. For instance, to incipient industries and new-born institutions, State support, Protection, the assurance of the secular arm, seem legitimate and indispensable. But the stately fabric, in its adult magnificence, would be merely injured by artificial props. The scaffolding falls off, the swaddling bands automatically release themselves, and the edifice stands alone whether trade or church, *ponderibus librata suis*. The higher expels the lower, the greater the less, the better the worse, and the fresh buds of Spring extrude the dead leaves that linger yet. Religion or Christianity is a song of degrees, a pilgrimage of ascents. We rise from lower levels, from love to love, from grace to grace, from glory to glory, through unceasing contests in which the smaller good eternally disputes the invasion of the grander good, till it is conquered in a loftier and completer synthesis. Every now and then our faith arises from a temporary eclipse or slumber, for in the awful rhythm of progress intervals of torpor appear requisite and the heart itself sleeps between its beats or it would soon wear out the machinery, and we have a resurrection of the dry bones as in the gor-



geous prophecy of Ezekiel. Systole and diastole, inspiration and expiration. Religion, so to speak, at times, retreats into itself to recuperate its powers, and then returns with oceanic impulse and more than tidal energy. The slumbering strife breaks out again, with redoubled might, and society is shaken to its foundations by some colossal personality or spiritual force, a Wesley, a Whitefield, a Newman, a Loisy. Then the old problem asserts itself once more, as it has from the days of Abraham and Lot down to the modern statesman's last resolution or irresolution, policy or impolicy, and the present weird revival on the bleak hills of wild Wales. "*If any man come to Me and hate not his father and mother and wife and children—yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.*" No one will contend that parents and wife and children are not good and precious possessions, and yet any one of them may be thrust between us and something dearer and better far in the gift of God alone, and become an enemy of the latter. A higher call, a deeper claim, a revolution in the evolution of the soul, may compel us to decide against these tender ties in the clash of opposing interests. "*Forget also thine own people and thy father's house.*" The state militant declares itself and commands us to remember we are always first and last fighting units in a fighting world. But the tendency of our time is to make things easy, to smooth over difficulties, to acquiesce in the norm of indifference, and to turn the sword of the Gospel into a ploughshare or plaything, or to regard it as

but an interesting relic or anachronism surviving from the savagery of Puritanism. But feeble and fatuous benevolence, whatever it may be, is not love or true charity. Kindness may be merciless, a consuming fire, and what wrath can be compared to "*the wrath of the Lamb?*" Love seeks to justify its existence, and proves itself by the sharpness of its weapons and the tremendous range of its exactions. It will have all or nothing, and brooks no rival near its throne. "*And from the days of John the Baptist until now the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence and the violent take it by force.*" "*Strive (agonise) to enter in at the straight gate.*" Some may object, that strong expressions appropriate in an age of ethnic enmity and universal war, in spite of the boasted *Pax Romana*, have no value or significance now. And yet experience refutes this immediately, the testimony of our own hearts maintains that nothing worth having was ever won without a determined struggle. Our Saviour spoke not as a politician or the representative of a conquered country, He took no petty national point of view, but He spoke as the Captain of our salvation calling His faithful soldiers to follow Him and walk in His footsteps from one battlefield to another. No doubt He bade us love our enemies, but He also bade us hate the very nearest and dearest if they would drag us down or if they conflicted with our sublimest and supreme interests. St. Paul, on the same lines and continuing and completing His Master's thought, said he was determined henceforth to know no man any more after the flesh. The

demands of the earthly home and the heavenly home antagonise each other, and the submission of the former lifts us up into the broader union of the great cosmic Christian family. Domestic ties are strong, but spiritual ties are stronger. And no bonds on earth were ever formed but to be broken, and finally merged in other bonds, more beautiful and great. Love cannot define itself, unless it appeals to higher and yet higher vantage posts. And these will never be attained or apprehended, without a process of everlasting renunciation, by which our hearts are purged of mortal grossness and the grave of each buried idol becomes a resurrection ground. And the Christ, who reveals Himself in the breaking of bread, reveals Himself also in the breaking of lives and thus as Love.

The chronic belligerency of Nature meets us at every turning of the road. We find, not merely in the laboratory with its artificial products and for each toxin its equivalent antitoxin, the poison and the antidote side by side and upon the same stalk, drawn up in battle array for the everlasting conflict, to evolve in the end a vaster harmony. The opposition of the two is the corner stone of the gigantic building, and at the heart of the storm and above the hostile shock is born of it a perpetual peace. Even in the very circulation of the blood science discovers two contending armies in constant collision, the white corpuscles of health (called phagocytes or leucocytes) and the microbes of disease, now it is asserted daintily dressed with a peculiar "opsonin" sauce, to render them more palatable. The sound

and the unsound fight for the mastery, the destructive and the constructive elements, and out of their salutary strife emerge better tone and tissue for the body and brain. The appetite for fasting, if the paradox may be permitted, appears a true and proper instinct. Repletion and depletion for ever war with each other to effect the most beneficial results. And, as breeders know, prepotency in the sexes or the determination of either sex desired owes much and perhaps most to the preponderance of the former or the latter. We oscillate naturally between feasts and fasts, as every religion has felt, from the time when the meal and the sacrifice were one. And "grace" before meals seems a survival of the fact, and points to a sacramental value. Our great Church has acted wisely in appointing a regular series of fasts and feasts and vigils, which testify to a permanent truth and are a profound recognition of the eternal cosmic order. Life, wherever we look, is a beautiful poem with marked strophe and antistrophe, and a splendid periodicity in the recurring pendulum of passion and action, pulse and counter pulse. Tidal winds and waves, cold and heat, summer and winter, rain and drought, in an oscillating balance maintain that unstable equilibrium which makes the world go round. Vergil's science was faulty, but he may have had a dim and distant glimpse of the great law, when he wrote "*omnia ventorum concurrere prælia vidi.*" And why, to visit a different province altogether, is poetry so defective now—poetry with its lost predicate? Why, since the death of Browning and

Tennyson "serene creators of immortal things," have we found no successor to fill or even occupy their thrones, and no one could proudly say, "*Sunt mihi quæ possint sceptrâ decere manus.*" We have plenty of true and brilliant poetry still, and none more virile than John Davidson's, but it is purely unifocal and not as it should be (like great poetry) bifocal and bifacial. It is either thought or feeling, when it should be both thought and feeling, either subjective or objective when it should be both subjective and objective—either optimist or pessimist, when it should be both optimist and pessimist—either personal or cosmopolitan, when it should be both personal and cosmopolitan—either particular or universal, when it should be both particular and universal. We want both the private accent of the individual and the larger utterance of the cosmos. *Vox populi* is sometimes *vox Dei*. And the popular judgment in this case seems justified. It is only as Browning and Tennyson and all great poets knew so well in practice if they never formulated the actual theory, by the interaction of these rival elements that the masterpieces of art can be produced. Even our uncrowned king, the man in the street, who is so true a guide, has a hazy perception that there is something wrong and something wanting about our present poetry, and so publishers cannot sell it and readers will not buy it. And hence it stands before us one-sided and therefore self-condemned.

The same disease or defect holds good unfortunately as to the preaching of the present day—

preaching often fluent, ready, resourceful, cultivated, but with a fatal shortcoming. Not so much because the immoral doctrine of Vicarious Punishment, rather than the moral doctrine of Vicarious Suffering, too frequently confronts us. Nor even because the lost language of Symbolism is still not understood and not appreciated by so many teachers, who should have learned from a study of both Testaments that the very best possible words can never interpret the deepest mysteries, and we need a different tongue. An ineradicable craving, seated in the ultimate foundations of human nature, demands rite and form and ceremony and music and colour and movement, to express our spiritual needs and afford, however faintly, some sort of religious satisfaction. Grave as these two errors are, they do not seem so dangerous as the fumbling kind of faith which our pulpits generally announce and require. No wonder, "the hungry sheep look up and are not fed." No wonder the masses remain untouched and unimpressed, and the old triumphant dictum of the Church might be fairly reversed and stated as "*extra ecclesiam omnis salus.*" The preaching is too often a semblance of dream preaching, without any definite relation to hard facts and the present world. It looks more like the diffusive life of sleep with its wild visions, than the concentrated life of reality and working men. Faith possesses no meaning and no message, unless it presents itself as a fighting force and a definite challenge to the indefinite which surrounds us, from which by a succession of conquering postulates

it builds up a definite religion. It is will applied to the speculative and spiritual, that maintains eternal war with any form of doubt. The cheap and vulgar faith, expressed as a purely passive attitude and simple reception of certain alleged truths, will never regenerate mankind. The most ignorant, by a wise intuition, indignantly reject it. Of course, the unhappy separation of action from faith is to a great extent responsible for the mutilated and mumbling Gospel of to-day. And yet the great Apostle stated the one position and gave the one explanation, when he wrote of the "*work of faith and labour of love*." Worshippers, who repose under the shadows of the "flapdoodle trees," and wait and wait and expect the "flapdoodle juice" to drip down into their open mouths, will wait and wait and expect for ever, as the "*rusticus expectat dum defluat amnis*." Lethargy is not faith, and inert hope is not faith. No, for faith is creative and wields all the powers of the imagination and has behind it the divine omnipotence of a free volition, and faith makes what it wills, as it wills what it makes. What the Christian world is dying for, what the slums and the submerged tenth insistently demand as a spiritual and moral minimum, is an aggressive militant faith, which by a perpetual negation of the doubting and indefinite carries its crusade into the enemy's country and thus, so to speak, recovers the lost Holy Grail. Mealy-mouthed benevolence, a nebulous feeling of tepid good-will towards all men, good and bad alike, rich in pious platitudes and comfortable generalities and

convenient abstractions, will never save a soul nor vanquish the vicious Trinity of Infidelity and Intemperance and Impurity. We want, in the first place, a faith that believes in itself and is sure of itself, because it has renounced itself, and in the act of renunciation recovered itself in Christ alone. And, in the second place, when we have found in Christ the one mediating term, we ask for a fighting faith that in its very defeats yet overcomes its enemies the most, and by unending missionary effort and martyrdom, realises itself in every resistance and annexes new converts and new territories for the truth of the Cross. It has been said, that, if our Lord is Life to the Church and to the individual we have an immediate contact and direct Presence. No doubt this view expresses an important truth, but it seems to ignore the fact of the eternal conflict between subject and object. No antagonism would ever be overcome and reconciled in a higher unity unless there were an ultimate connecting ground. The radical antithesis of mind and matter and everything could not be resolved without a mediatorial agency. And on the least analysis, it is Christ and Christ alone in Nature and in Grace who fulfils the ministry of reconciliation.

The grand One Mediator extends Himself through ways and means, symbols and sacraments, and operates through awful mysteries embodied in outward and visible forms. And the Church still possesses the gift of tongues, in that she addresses her various members in various languages and not in mere words alone—words



too often tainted at the source by material images and false analogies that suggest anything but spiritual realities. Thus is Christ multiplied, in His servants and in Church ceremonies, a thousandfold. But unless we remember religion is a battle seen or unseen, between everlasting adverse forces, "*for we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against spiritual wickedness*"—and faith is sword as well as shield, and unless the trumpet gives a certain sound, we shall be recreant soldiers of the Cross. The faith that prophesies smooth things and makes compromises and desires to please everybody and really conciliates none, but trims and truckles and tergiversates and ranges itself on the side of the majority or Mammon or the folly of the present fashion, and never commits itself and cannot even fall into one splendid error, breeds heresies and corrupts the doctrine of the Church in her chosen sanctuary. Better downright sacrilege and open blasphemy, than such timid and temporizing facing-both-ways. "*This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God.*" We appeal to the ordeal of battle, "*Yea, a sword shall pierce through thine own soul also.*"

## VI

### DYNAMIC RELIGION AND HYPER-

### DOGMATISM

DYNAMIC religion and dogmatic theology appear equally necessary for the soul of the individual and the soul of the people, in the course of their evolution. We want alike the symmetry of the containing form, and the fire of the leavening spirit. To suppose that we can dispense with dogma, displays a curious ignorance of human nature as revealed in history or attested by experience. A religion without dogma is no religion, and a church without definite creeds is a church without a faith. Doctrine must be stated, clearly if possible, but stated it must be, though our great mysteries can only be presented in the language of symbol and accommodation and metaphor. Such solemn truths, beyond the range of reason, seem absorbed by a kind of sacred instinct above the ordinary interventions of steps and stages and logical inferences, and enter into the texture of our fundamental intuitions. We believe them because they are impossible, we love them because they are absurd. But when dogmatic theology becomes hyperdogmatic theology, and in its natural and necessary antagonism to dynamic

religion grows encroaching and denies the claims of the spirit altogether and endeavours to monopolize the power of both and refuses to advance or expand with new periods and different needs, then indeed it mistakes its vocation and is an obstruction and not an assistant on the forward road of the highest development.

We are given at the outset a revelation, and we must make the best of our materials. And by revelation is meant literally an unveiling, inevitably adapted to the time and place and persons and expressed in the ordinary terms of the age, and therefore unquestionably and even ostentatiously partial, and not an explanation. God announces, but He never explains. To expect this would be unreasonable, because we find ourselves equipped with an intelligence equal to the solution of all the problems offered us, at any rate for the practical purposes of immediate interest and guidance. Besides, explanations never explain, they invite familiarity and the consequent contempt. And, when we begin to explain a thing, we have already passed beyond its influence, and it can do nothing more for us. We capitulate to the unexplained, we are moved by the inexplicable. The truth, that has yielded up all its contents and leaves no romance behind to check and cheat the reality out of its grosser obviousness, that cherishes no saving clause of mystery, has descended into the limbo of obsolete facts. *Omne ignotum pro magnifico.* Even the fullest revelation only withdraws one veil or two, it admits us into the Holy Place, but it still reserves as its own the Holy of

Holies behind the ultimate forbidding veil, into which flesh and blood and human infirmities and finite intelligence can neither dare nor hope to enter. We may learn something of its secret meaning at dissolution, if death be indeed the light that slays. When we cease to wonder we cease to adore, as the great Mystics and even Bacon himself have plainly seen. But the revelation is not so much of God to man, or of heaven to earth, as of man to man. When we understand ourselves, we understand God, and the one key still is *γνώθι σεαυτόν*. Mistaken notions about the significance and service of revelation have led to many and bitter disappointments. And yet a moment's consideration will assure us that no religion would be of the least vital or permanent use or benefit, if it professed to explain what is by its very constitution and for all possible profit absolutely inexplicable. The revelation that tells too much and enters into earthly (and not heavenly) particulars, like the book of Mormon and even the Koran, *ipso facto*, defeats its own object and commits suicide. To catalogue the angels and classify their qualities or virtues, to depict in glowing colours the scenery of the spiritual world, to fasten inappropriate labels on the various objects, though it be done in the language of poetry and genius, is to materialise the immaterial and import the methods of the naturalist into the awful *arcana* of the supreme sanctuary. Swedenborg attempted this invasion, and astronomy records his falsified prophecies and ignorant failures. There we find the inexorable fate of all hyperdogmatism, and the theo-

logical finalities. Revelation, on its subjective side, is fluid and not fixed. When we crystallize its contents, the temporary forms thus given and aping eternity condemn themselves and are stamped with hopeless impotence and sterility. Cast-iron dogmas mean decay. Religion, that commences to justify itself and apologise for its existence, commences to die. Truth requires no explanation of this kind, the very statement is its own proof. It shines with the light it carries, and appeals directly and immediately to those cosmic instincts and that universal consciousness which we all possess, beyond the need of evidence and the reach of sordid syllogisms. Spirit does not refuse the aid of reason, because it is itself the quintessence of reason and that which makes reason reasonable, but nevertheless it speaks to spirit first and last. Deep calls unto deep, height communes with kindred height, and the heaven within cries to the native heaven without us—only in so far as it includes us. A religion, dissected in all its various limbs and organs, may be exceedingly rational, while the arguments in its support seem superfluously conclusive, but it protests too much, and we end by despising it and discarding it. Spiritual mysteries, by the simple or complex nature of the case, stand above the instruments of the laboratory, the scale and the scoop, and the petty qualitative and quantitative analyses of Science, or their corresponding equivalents. We may (we must) agree to call everything in a sense sacred, even the most secular things, and such a view expresses a great and beautiful truth, but not-

withstanding this concession the fact remains that the touch of mere earthiness, the atmosphere of the class-room, the odour of the operation table, must be fatal sooner or later to any religion. Look at those coarse, we might say profane, particulars in certain anatomical hymns. The presence of these revolting details, in themselves so pure and innocent when confined to their proper place and a reverend obscurity, and the fact that they have been sung in public by thousands of congregations for many years with passionate warmth, demonstrate by their sensuous savour and disastrous physiological suggestiveness the death so far of true devotion. We cannot dilate on sexual features or differences in the sanctuary. The worshipper who does it may practise a cult, but he does not really adore God. He is, to recall Wordsworth's famous lines, a man who would "peep and botanise upon his mother's grave."

We desire a religious Science, but we dread a scientific Religion. And this, as no honest critic can dispute, has become the great and growing danger of our time. The halo of the saint under the microscope disappears, the riddle of the universe has been read by the philosopher, and by the mathematicians who with lavish generosity have called up out of their inner consciousness and their amazing calculations a multitude of new infinities to redress the balance of the old one world. The atom now betrays its secret and is an atom no more but a microcosm of electric ions, and "quantitative prevision" (as Herbert Spencer called it) already salutes from afar a fresh Godhead in the sweet sim-

plicity of unadulterated Ether alone. And neither Religion nor Theology has any quarrel with Science so long as it respects their integrity and does not threaten their peculiar scope with the inappropriate scalpel, or the table of weights and measures, or the rule of three.

We want more faith and less reason. Paley never said a more false and foolish thing than this, when he made discovery co-extensive with proof. The very opposite, at any rate in Religion, happens to be the case. A demonstrated revelation is a damned revelation. Logic sounds its death knell, and Academic undertakers (with half the letters of the alphabet after their venerable names) are always abundant and ready to provide at the briefest notice the most gorgeous of funerals, and learned professors will take a melancholy pleasure in digging its grave. We may well revise Paley's reckless dictum, and declare that he alone discovers spiritual facts who abandons proof and consigns it to its proper place—to Mathematics or the morals of Utopia. Here, in the province of religion, we require faith. And by this we do not quite understand the definition of Vinet, who has called it the will applied to objects of speculation, though he was groping grandly in the right direction. Faith means rather the recognition of the Divine Will as revealed in the heart of man. To speak popularly, it is simply an open mind, or a mind purged from cant and passion and prejudice, willing to receive and be taught. It implies no stiff attitude, no strain or stress, but a simple surrender of the whole attention to God, the con-

centration that the child gives to his mother when he expects something—the liberating of the will of man from all particular entanglements or bias, for communication with the Will of God. To put faith into a theological formula is to put it into its coffin. We possess it at birth as one of our fundamental faculties, that asserts itself immediately and enters into every department of life. We can no more explain it than we can explain the mystery of life itself—to the satisfaction of the theorist. Its presence, its power, its universal usefulness as the most practical as well as the most imaginative of all powers we know, and this is all we need to know. We believe because we must. A woman's reason or absence of reason, it will be asserted, but still the best and simplest creed in the world. And the people who will never be convinced without proof are just the very people who are not convinced with proof when it does come. Faith, explaining itself, is faith stultifying itself. It amounts to a demand for the meaning of meaning, or the proof of proof. We cannot get beyond the very bottom of Nature. The significance of faith will always be best interpreted by the action and reaction and interaction, and the perpetual contradictions, of its twin sister doubt. If we want to confirm ourselves in our creeds, we must go to our brother the Agnostic and sit at his feet for a time, till we recover our lost strength and get new cheer from the ineptitude of his idle negations. The eternal *Thou shalt not*, bids us recoil on the eternal *Thou shalt*. The universal *We know not because we cannot know*, finds its



reply and refutation in the universal *We know because we must*. Yes, paradoxical as it may appear, the truth remains that faith is proved and justified by doubt. It is not merely Tennyson's obvious view—

“There lives more faith in honest doubt,  
Believe me, than in half the creeds.”

but doubt by its very negation sends the soul violently back upon the opposite attitude, and to that extent defines the indefinable of faith. Doubt itself is the sufficient antidote. Trust and distrust, in their endless conflicts, pave the path for broader beliefs and yet more magnificent misgivings. So-called faith, that embraces absurdities and runs riot in extravagant details, and tickets its most grotesque utterances as Divine oracles, should be described properly as fanaticism. But there is no open mind here, no universality, no glorious indeterminism of the will trembling towards God. Our primitive aboriginal instincts or intuitions never lie, they are infallible. Science may call them the organized inheritance of the race, or ancestral germ plasm, but where is the difference at root? Revelation speaks to the open mind, the universal feeling, the unsophisticated appetite for the Eternal Element—namely, God. Religion, thus necessarily and naturally born, offers no credentials to mere Metaphysics or a Science that perpetually changes its front, and is its own evidence. The local colours, the temporary tones, attached to it as passing accidents, do not touch the essentials and

fall off when the purposes they served require their presence no more.

Christianity existed before Christ and there never was a time when it did not exist, and the Cross grew in the Garden of Eden side by side with the Tree of Life. The strange thing is this, that theology which too often in the matter of the Scriptures has defined and refined *de omnibus rebus et quibusdam aliis*, especially *de quibusdam aliis*, has overlooked some of the most important points, in discussing others that perhaps have no root in reality or inference from reality. Yet the principal teaching of the Old Testament is simple enough and resides in this. It has but one burden from the first page to the last, from the beginning to the end—namely, the Incarnation of God. Agnostics and idle, shallow critics have always held up to ridicule its gross pervading anthropomorphism, as if it were matter for condemnation. When, in fact, the Old Testament was only written with this express object, to announce the truth that from the very outset God was Man—the Humanity of God, the Human in Divine. And here the instinct of the untutored savage, the earliest inhabitant of the earth, was in its essentials a veridical conviction. Ignorance had yet a saving and certain knowledge. Take away this proclamation from the Old Testament, and the first revelation in the Bible will be eviscerated of its most valuable contents and its ruling idea. All along, the Holy Spirit, through the prophets and inspired writers, kept endeavouring to make man perceive his Maker, his Father, was necessarily in

*kind* just like man himself. The language used, the excess of details particularizing the bodily resemblance in limbs and senses and all the various parts and powers, were so many witnesses to the stupendous truth. Indeed how could man have been created otherwise, and remained or even been religious? Unless he were like God in kind, no common ground for intercourse, no room for the tender and intimate relation of worship, could have existed. "I am a Man just like you yourself," the sacred oracles kept always crying. Religion presupposes some sort of common measure or mutual interests through which the Worshipped and the worshipper spiritually act and react upon each other. So the violent anthropomorphism, instead of being watered down and explained away as the artifice of accommodation or the desperate expedient of an encroaching and superstitious priestcraft, must be allowed to predominate and be insisted upon as the crowning glory of the Old Testament, and not its crushing shame. We shall admit then that the current conception of early religion, as one founded mainly upon fear and sustained essentially by force and the terrors of law, has but a superficial support and no ultimate sanction in any honest inner interpretation of the most ancient books. The thunder and lightning of Sinai, the earthquake and eclipse, the penalties written in blood, were after all but the husk and not the kernel of revelation, the circumstance and not the soul of the religion, and mere outward accessories demanded by a barbarous age. God spoke as a

Human Being to human beings, with precisely the same kind of nature though of course infinitely greater, but He spoke in the language and symbolism of the period when there was little reverence for life. It formed no part of the Divine intention to frighten man by an overwhelming exhibition of majesty. God walked and talked, acted and spoke in every province of life, less as God than as a Man among men. The appeal to force and fear, in so far as these did prevail, were only the current coin of the age which would not have understood milder methods and could not have developed in any other way. The restraints did not seem cruel then, and Jehovah had to be translated more or less into terms of Oriental despotism. But still there was the Incarnation ages before Christ came.

Theology again has missed the peculiar note, the passionate outcome of the whole New Testament, namely its Theanthropism. After the sublime and sustained teaching of the ancient prophets and the ancient order of things, it followed by a process more inexorable than any mere logic, as a continuation and complement of the early faith, that man was God. Revelation could not possibly take any other course. The one naturally, beautifully, irresistibly implied the other. They were two sides, two harmonious halves of one stupendous fact, beyond and above the groping thought of the Hyperdogmatism which petrifies and kills whatever it touches. Finding a living truth, it always leaves a fossil. Of a fluid, vital, elastic, comprehensive and universal creed it makes a coffin, and turns a

cradle into a grave. The anthropomorphism of the first dispensation predicted and demanded the theanthropism of the second dispensation. Then and there the divine economy of grace stood revealed, self-justified, perfect. Nothing essential can be added to it now, and nothing essential can be taken away from it. The last word is spoken. *Veritas locuta est, causa finita est*. God is Man and ever was and ever will be, and therefore by a reason above reason man is God and ever will be. Religion now through Society and the growing solidarity of the race will work out its own salvation, in the Power of the Cross. Christ's infinite Resurrection repeats itself every day, every hour, every minute, in the resurrection of the masses, and the perpetual renaissance of the human mind. When man realises the fact that he is Divine, he will gradually become Divine. His life, his conversation, his law, even his international ethics, at present the ethics of a burglar, will display the tone and temper required by that inheritance. The Divine right of the king, translated at last into its proper significance, will be the Divine right of his lowliest subject.

Millennia may elapse before this knowledge is power—*nam ipsa scientia potentia est*—and is possessed as the common property of all. Baptism acknowledges it, the Holy Eucharist confesses it and imparts it, and every act or office in the end performed or exercised in the right temper of reverence and in a religious spirit will be recognised as Divine, and every meal when bread is broken will

become a sacrament. But owing largely to the caricature of theology, hyperdogmatism, we learn slowly and man enters only by painful degrees into his mighty heritage. We are tardily discovering that the distinction between the secular and the sacred must be abolished, and we have (strange paradox) Christians conducting a crusade against miracles. What is Revelation, what is Inspiration, what is Religion, if not a miracle? Each and all protest for ever against the vapid vulgarity of the commonplace and a cheap and vulgar materialism. There is nothing that is not at the same time a wonder and a *σημείον*, a presage of something more, a promise of something behind the beggarly surface, and an evidence of the immanent Divinity. Take the very simplest fact. Who knows how the chlorophyll or the green colouring matter is worked up in the dim laboratory of the plant's cells and how what we call dead matter (though nothing is dead but hyperdogmatism) or rather one kind of matter is completely transformed into another kind? They say indeed, but we can never be sure to which theory Science will stick, that the bridge between the organic and the inorganic has been found and the great gulf crossed. But the chasm between thought and matter and motion remains where it was and what it was, as wide and deep as ever. Everything, if we only look below the outside surface, grows miraculous, from the step that is but an arrested fall, to the fall which initiates a new and loftier ascent. Revelation appeals to miracle, Inspiration arises out of miracle, and Religion lives

by miracle. Destroy man's inherent sense of awe and craving for the wonderful, and you destroy not merely miracle but man. Such wanton brutality robs us of our blue sky, our lovely shadows and land of far distances, our heavenly atmosphere, the golden halo in the misty mountain peaks, the rose of dawn, and the Divine dream which renders life worth living. It is our ideals, our aspirations, our unsyllogised creeds, our cosmic intuitions, which form the raw and real material of progress by antagonism and civilisation in spite of bayoneted battalions and destruction made easy, no less than of Religion. The true high priests of Science, who opened new doors into eternity and new windows out of Space and Time, were always the sublimest visionaries. For each great step of Science is an act of faith. And miracles are just the outflashings of the Divine, the virtue that must flow forth, the odour of the ointment that cannot be hid. God cannot help being God, for (to speak with all reverence) He is built that way. And man likewise cannot help being divine, because he likewise is built that way. There is in us the upward trend, that infinite curve, *sic itur ad astra*. Nay, more yet, "*sublimi feriam sidera vertice*." Do we dare to quarrel with the very terms of existence, the awful tenure by which we hold on to anything and everything? We believe just because we cannot believe. The possible for us remains eternally the impossible, and the impossible the possible. Our *credo* is, "*Possunt quia (non) posse videntur*." We might even venture to assert on the other hand that

nothing is miraculous, because all is miraculous. But, on the last analysis and frequently on the very first, what does not appear or transpire as wonderful, and supernormal if not supernatural? The commonest feature of the commonest object, if examined closely and carefully resists our scrutiny and resolves itself into something inexplicable. *Omnia exeunt in mysteria.* At the same time, there seem to be two great cosmic laws, continuity or evolution, and discontinuity or interruption, which contradict and therefore explain each other. Of the former we think we know a great deal, and of the latter we admit that we know nothing. But faith can teach us a little even about this, but not Science and not Hyperdogmatism with its fossilized forms. We must not define too much. Definitions announce the doom of Religion, and Hyperdogmatism always and only arrives just in time to be too late to render any service but that of the sexton. It tolls the bell of some departing form, and shows us that Religion (though in essentials for ever one and the same) is now girding up its loins for a new course, and is about to take another giant curve.



## VII

### OXFORD v. CAMBRIDGE

THIS match has been played ever since the promoted or developed amœba, thanks to the care and cleverness of its wet nurse Evolution, began to differentiate itself from the environing cosmos and call itself human, and will continue when the names of the two great sister Universities are no more than a beautiful tradition. It is a duel that really had no beginning and can certainly have no end. We must all of us, willingly or unwillingly, consciously or unconsciously, play on and play up and play the game in the eternal tragedy of thought. Doubt presents itself to us as a truth in the making, and one noble misgiving counts more than a whole world of figures and blue books and statistics and so-called "facts." It matters little in the long run and on a stage of perpetual transitions, what the predicate affirms itself to be for the moment, while the necessary negation synchronizes with its birth and immediately defines it, so long as we have a subject to which it can be harnessed. And Progress is simply a restatement of any given particular predicate in terms of a new time. And to love Truth, with an undivided heart, is to be immortal. He who

has had but a fleeting glimpse of God can never die. It is the vision alone that constitutes a future without a close. Not to love the Truth, not to see God, means death and the lowermost hell of all possible and impossible hells.

Everything that lies about us is not "fact," but symbol or sacrament. The fire burns not to warm us or yield a passing light, but to teach us and spiritualise us as a "live coal from off the altar" of Heaven. Unless the bread we eat and the water we drink become moral acts and religious services and raise us nearer to God, they are useless and merely injurious. We had better starve—nay, we are actually starving towards the better and higher and greater. Each morsel we take should be a confession of faith and a testimony to the Truth. Matter confronts us as a vehicle of mind, body comes as a witness to the spirit, and the outward form that does not touch an inward and yet visible eternity at some point is formless and renounces its right or forsakes its office. Nothing at bottom is altogether common or unclean, nothing can be altogether void. If we see or fancy we see just a blot or a blank, we but visualise ourselves and our own vital defects, but nothing else. It is the dull brute phenomenal "fact" of life, that renders it so empty and mean. Everything must be sacred, somehow and somewhere, and everything is, and nothing was or will be quite secular, because all from the loftiest point of view is bathed in Heaven and God. We have been told by statesmen and others to think imperially and in kingdoms and continents. Not so, but

let us rather try to think after God and like God and with God, and then we shall think truly and Divinely, not in empires, but in heavens and hells, and spiritually, in accordance with the mandate of our psychological dualism.

Oxford v. Cambridge. Yes, the classical temper and sense of curve and colour and line and form, the devotion to principles and poetry and light, the passion for liberty even in the darkest conspiracies of Conservatism, the reign of the spirit on the one hand and in this camp. But on the other hand and in the opposite camp, the veneration of the law and servile submission to mathematical proof and the barren letter. Yet withal a loyal scientific allegiance and a craving for accuracy and irrefrangible demonstration. The gospel according to Paley (and not Paul)—“he alone discovers who proves”—a fatal contempt for imagination and the grandest part of Science, its sublime intuitions and guesses, and gracious Keplerisms. Ah, and superstition attaches not only to religions and politics and ideas and institutions, but to the dreadful sanctuary of Induction itself. A business-like manner may and often does co-exist with an unbusiness-like mind. Accurate language will frequently be but a mask endeavouring to conceal inaccurate thoughts. And exact methods can be inexactly applied. Consider, for an instant, that amazing imposition labelled “law,” to which the Teutonic (but not the Celtic or even the Slav) races egregiously and grotesquely and ignorantly bow down in abject servitude, as if “law” were some tremendous Creative Force, rival or co-

assessor of the Supreme Deity, and not merely a sort of luggage label for cosmic despatch purposes—a particular way of looking at a particular class of things, and a way invariably soon superseded and absorbed into some higher “law” or generality. We are all of us, Oxford and Cambridge alike, but especially Cambridge, slaves of this empty superstition and idle reverence, which rests at the uttermost, as every mere “law” must, on an imperfect induction. It is thus we glorify our infirmities, and try to persuade ourselves they are as infallible as they seem sublime. The world would go on just as well, and probably much better, if we emancipated ourselves from this preposterous yoke, and recognised the truth that the cosmos has even more room in it for miracle than for the transiency of any “fact” however certain and solid it may look. “Blessed are they who expect nothing.” Here we find all unsuspected in a popular phrase a fundamental verity. This too has been well expressed in another vulgar saying, “It is the unexpected that happens.” Yes, almost in the same breath, we declare our belief and disbelief in miracles. For while as men of science we reject such a creed with scorn, nevertheless as men of sense we accept it and act upon it every day and every hour and every moment. And even Herbert Spencer himself, in his latest publication was gravitating in the direction of a faith, in which the paradox and the popular belief and saying were identical, when he admitted that Feeling and not Reason was the most important part of man’s equipment. Though, of course,

they never can be separated. And it is only by their endless antagonism, we find beauty and life.

Oxford v. Cambridge, light against law. But we need them both, we cannot dispense with either, and the spirit without the letter would be unfruitful. They make together the eternal and infinite oxymoron or union of contraries. By the universal clash of things we move, we progress, we produce better and still better results, we arrive at ends that prove to be only vaster new beginnings. We spiritualise the "letter," we illuminate the "law." And thereby we obtain fresher and fuller statements of the everlasting questions asked by the Sphinx of Nature that is being perpetually unriddled and then riddled again. Oxford takes from Cambridge, and Cambridge takes from Oxford. Now one exercises the ascendancy, and now the other stands forth as the predominant partner, in the unceasing and fertile struggle of life. We have periods of "law" and "letter" domination, in which Science distributes her passionless favours and re-arranges the old landmarks to the satisfaction of most. And then comes the reaction, the recoil of the pendulum, and the rule of light and sweetness, the championship of forlorn faiths and impossible ideals that are yet the true saving faiths and only possible ideals. *Victrix causa diis placuit, sed victa Catoni*. And here it is Newman against Newton, and Oxford wins all along the line intellectual, whether ethics or metaphysics, and the charm at once mediæval and modern compels even her enemies for a while to murmur though with reluctant lips her new and

ancient *credo*—yes, still, *credo quia impossibile*. Oxford could not be Oxford, would not be true to her splendid traditions of inconsistency, and the glorious idealism of her transfigured egotism, if she always lingered to determine the logical sequence of every act or step, and waited for the proof or the tomorrow that never comes. The cold shadow of demonstration in her esteem only kills whatever it touches, and wherever it falls. Knowing the two scientific positions in this unscientific world of ours, this congeries of discontented atoms, are Romanism and Agnosticism, she coquets with both and will have neither and yet oscillates with cultivated indifference between the two, believing and disbelieving alike with all her heart, by conviction one and in sentiment the other—and particularly the other. Evolution amuses Oxford. It promises so much, like a new toy, but it displays a dangerous side and may disturb vested interests or darling abuses, and so she handles it with the serious smile of that educated ease which suffers fools and theories gladly. Gravitation, she remembers and Cambridge remembers, was to have been the key to unlock every door, but failed to do so. And perhaps Evolution, the fresh bauble, may break in her hand. History assures us, and history so far repeats itself, that truths (never at the very utmost more than partial truths) are at first discredited and denounced as pernicious doctrines, fraught with peril to the bases of morality and the foundations of religion, and then are accepted as panaceas for every ill and solutions of every problem, till in the end

they become as grossly revered as they were barbarously rejected, only to go into the great crucible of further inquiry again. To speak honestly, we know nothing final about anything in terms of absolute knowledge, except that we do know this much. But the lines of future development lie in the direction of more faith and not less faith, and miracle and not law or beggarly fact. ὁ ἐγγύς μου ἐγγύς τοῦ πυρὸς [καὶ τῆς μαχαίρας]. Oxford at any rate has learned this elementary principle of the ordeal of the fire and the test of the separating sword. In the glorious insolence of her youth, the flower of the whole cosmos, she perpetually renews herself and is born again to cherish the same lost causes and certain uncertainties, so ancient and yet so modern in fresh and flagrant efflorescence. And yet not quite like Penelope and her web, though her suitors now are many and come from the ends of the earth. The old problems appear in other forms, the old materials in other patterns. Which shall we designate it, comedy or tragedy, this superb trifling and leisured luxury of thought, in dealing with the eternal questions? Is it an Olympic interlude only, between two infinities—the state before birth and the state after death? Sometimes her voice sounds like the inspired babble of a divine child, sporting with the great mysteries of the unknown Yesterday and the unknown To-morrow, and grandly careless of both. But notwithstanding, or rather because of, the beautiful impertinence of her immortal youth, framed in its goodly setting of mediæval magic, the Oxford spirit at the core of

things seems true to life and the gallant conflicts of life. Chivalry yet remains in her gracious retreats and her cloistered souls.

Sin, regarded in its essence, appears to be the moral obliquity which for the sake of a sordid comfort and miserable convenience evades the awful and endless conflict, to which God and Nature for ever summon us. It is that fatal cowardice which refuses to fight, and declines the challenge offered in the very conditions of life. We sin when we tamely stand aside and let the saving tumult of battle pass by us and roll on. The guilt resides less in the breach of boundaries or transgression, less in missing the mark, or a bad shot, as the old Greeks thought, when the bow was the life, than in standing still and capitulating to the first temptation, and in not sending a single arrow or prayer up to God for deliverance. The sinner does not so much fight badly or on the wrong side, as not fight at all. To strive even against the Truth is still a step in the right direction. It displays a realisation of conflict and difficulty and a sense of enigmas to be faced and answered somehow. Light reveals itself during the process and the Redemption of the Cross never stays far distant from the humblest soldier. The knight errant for Christ's sake has been often at first simply a knight erring. We may avoid, possibly, the given facts of life, but we cannot deny them—that all things are set over against each other. Day contends with night, town with country, body with spirit, present with past, mystery with surface meaning, the pas-



toral state with the predatory and the agricultural with the industrial, and Oxford with Cambridge. Errors, however widely they roam, return to the fold at last, and by addition or subtraction through their militant marchings and counter-marchings are resolved into homely truths with which an arch-deacon might lie down in peace and safety. But even a verity may be either a curse or a blessing, according as we use it. And Mount Ebal is not far from Mount Gerizim. All depends on the kind of separation or devotion, whether for good or evil, for life or death, rest or work. The sweetest and truest truth, if consecrated to disuse and stagnation, like a sword kept in its scabbard, or merely hoarded in some secret chamber like uninvested treasure, will accomplish nothing and earn nothing and produce nothing. As the manna stored too long, it breeds worms and stinks, and we have *pyæmia* of the soul, or the growth of corruption and the life of death. Empire has waxed with conflict and waned with its absence. If we glance at the epochs of history, we shall find greatness and expansion accurately traced and explained by antagonism. The one appears the exact measure of the other. Periods of peace and stagnation never achieved an important conquest and never will. Adventure, aggression, whatever we choose to term it, implies an alert intelligence and a heart awake to the infinite possibilities of life. Happy perhaps the people whose annals are dull—yes, happy in a mean content, but not healthy or helpful or vitally and universally stimulating to the whole cosmos. Πάντα

ῥεῖ. Heaven is movement, change, and hell stagnation or death. Even a change of or to evils were almost better than none at all. Μεταβολὴ πάντων γλυκύτατον. We must move on and fight on and play the game, or go under. It is idle to quarrel with the game to which we are invited and the terms imposed. Movement against, and therefore movement with things, since only thus can we neutralize defects and complete our beginnings and realise ourselves, is the law of Nature. It merely means that we must be something and not nothing in society, we must justify our existence by giving a reason for it and a proof of it. Religion, for instance, occasionally grows too comfortable and grants concessions to or makes terms with its natural enemy, the world. It falls asleep, it dies. Compromise may be needful, capitulation is not. Then comes the revival, rude and crude generally, but nevertheless salvation. Alas, the grand old Church even sometimes—nay, too frequently nods—*aliquando bonus dormitat Homerus*. Spiritual earthquakes regenerate religion, they arouse the grand old fighting instincts and the forgotten facts, that where the missionary and martyr spirit is cold the institution also is cold and a useless encumbrance. Religion must account for what it feels and says, by work done and by moral miracles. Revivals may be little more than the dust that goes before the wind, but they show that the Spirit is beginning to stir among the dry bones. And when the storm does come, it will be the breath of Omnipotence.

Oxford v. Cambridge. Science and industries against Literature and Art, the analytic against the synthetic faculty, painful process against the intuitive flashes of inspiration, talent against genius. Oxford by preference constructive, Cambridge destructive, and the world—old contest between the useful and the beautiful, the picture and the machine, and the cosmos incomplete and even unlovely without both aspects and both energies. The one with a natural and necessary orientation of the soul, through her glorious faiths and yet more glorious doubts or fears seeing God in everything and everything in God. The other studious, enterprising, walking circumspectly or accurately (*ἀκριβῶς*) through the paths of laborious problems, to be made productive and proper rather than pretty, like a cat carefully picking its way along a wall that is hedged and topped with broken glass—*festinans lente*. Book-learned, letter-perfect, magnifying her grammar and her Greek texts, classical in appearance but not in spirit, marvelling that the sun does not stand still because some audacious German scholar has punctuated a line of Æschylus with a comma where there was no comma before, pedantic, precise, cumbered with much knowledge—such is Cambridge.

But where and what would the dreamer be without the man of action, practical and plodding, to correct his visions and apply his fancies and yoke them between the shafts of work-a-day procedure? And how should the matter-of-fact manufacturer gather grist for his labouring mills, unless he

sought it from the merchant of ideas? Yet after all it is the dreamer that pioneers the road of progress and officers the vanguard, and from his study moves the levers of the world. And assuredly it is Oxford that has discovered the secret of happiness, and *that* is to make a religion of service and a worship of work. *Laborare est orare*. Her history reads as a record of the Church, not without the witness of martyrdoms, and in her very denials she has confessed most her Lord and Master as unworthy to be crucified on His Cross. In her the cosmic and the hypercosmic meet and mingle. At every Movement, and the Oxford (Church) Movement was but one among many, she accepted the fact that time and space were not mere limits to be overcome by the spirit, but portals into eternity, through which the spirit asserted by opposition its Divine transcendency. Each new baptism of life arose from the Church's inherent power to renew itself by fresh charities and chivalries and the tolerance that pardoned all because it understood all, as part of the universal progress. And no soldier fights like the dreamer of dreams, whose splendid speculations unceasingly clash with the actual present and the pinch of squalid toil and the mean magnificences of commerce. So the battle rages for ever, Oxford v. Cambridge. And, as Heraclitus said, Πόλεμος πάντων μὲν πάτηρ ἐστὶ, πάντων δὲ βασιλεύς.

## VIII

### VICARIOUS SUFFERING AND SELF-PRESERVATION

REASON has always ridiculed the theory of Vicarious Suffering, as the fond invention of a dead or dying theology, and yet it is Reason now which supplies the evidence which tends to transform a supposed fancy into a wonderful if unintelligible fact. But mysteries are none the less real because they remain mysteries, nor do we lightly reject problems because at first they seem insoluble. In the light of the accepted solidarity of the human race and the intimate unity of the cosmos, the teaching alike of Philosophy and Science, we see the faint beginnings to an interpretation of a difficult doctrine and the beautiful gleam of the distant dawn. If we all are one, bound up together in the same bundle of life, the reproach of immorality imputed to Vicarious Suffering loses much of its weight. It is the price we pay for our unity and the Divine prerogative of Free Will, which, however severely limited its range, appears to be a stubborn fact. And though the purchase money is undoubtedly a heavy toll, for the privilege procured it cannot be called excessive. But, it will be alleged, this assertion does not hold good

at any rate of the animal and vegetable worlds. There, too, we find the shadow of Vicarious Suffering without any corresponding gain of Free Will to leave a balance in their favour. But this seems an unsupported statement, an idle assumption.

In the law of Evolution and the survival of the fittest by Natural Selection, neither animals nor plants act or can act like pure automata. They must possess something like our feeling of preference or power of discrimination, and an ability to choose between competing alternatives. We might even maintain that they enjoy a rudimentary kind of self-consciousness, because they can hardly fail to discern the difference between themselves and a world of external *stimuli* for ever impinging kindly or unkindly upon them. And it is this sense of resistance, and nothing more or less, from which gradually evolves the conception of self-consciousness. As soon as any creature or thing feels there is another than itself, it has begun to be self-conscious. Dim and confused and contradictory this sense may be, but it must be a fact. Evolution could hardly work as an efficient and sufficient cause, unless all the components involved in the universal struggle for existence were endowed with some faculty resembling choice and some true if nebulous perception of personal identity—an identity abiding unchanged in the midst of a changing world and even a changing form.<sup>1</sup> In short,

<sup>1</sup> I found after writing this, Professor Ward in his Gifford Lectures attributing teleological energy and even a kind of consciousness to plant-life.

if the cosmos is one, we should expect to find everywhere the same laws, though inevitably and naturally the further back we go the more obscure their operation becomes. Increase of organised and elaborate differentiation, implies increase of light. And the reverse holds equally true.

Now if our Saviour came to teach us anything by way of example, it certainly was the great law of Vicarious Suffering. Whether we know it or not, whether we like it or not, whether we will it or not, the solidarity of the race and the unity of creation forbid us ever to live entirely for ourselves. "*He saved others, Himself He cannot save.*" Christ's very crucifiers unconsciously testified to this. "*Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.*" It will be readily objected that self-sacrifice for enemies is a far grander act of devotion. But this, on examination, will prove to be one of those cheap and easy criticisms of which we have far too many. The answer is, that our Lord recognised no enemies, or rather He treated His enemies as friends and admitted no distinction between them. How could He do otherwise than He had taught so clearly and so long? "*Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you.*" Besides, our Saviour, as a matter of course, anticipated the protomartyr St. Stephen when He cried on the Cross, "*Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.*" He could not exhibit Himself as acting on a lower plane of being, and

He did not. This is one of the Divine impossibilities, that even God is unable to deny Himself. If it might be otherwise, He would *ipso facto* cease to be Divine. And all through His Life on earth we find the Saviour negating His own peace and comfort and safety, surrendering His Human Body and earthly ties, in order to affirm His Divinity. The *kenosis* of the one was the *pleroma* of the other. He was perpetually losing Himself, that He might find Himself and fulfil Himself the more in and through the suffering of the Perpetual Cross. Had He ever for one moment acted with a view to save Himself, or even only permitted the thought to enter His mind, He would still have remained the best and greatest Man that ever lived, He might even have remained a God of a kind, but He could not have been our Redeemer. We remember well, at the beginning of His Ministry during the Temptation after the terrible fast of forty days and forty nights, how He refused any compromise and declined to do anything to help Himself by releasing the forces of Omnipotence. He could have turned stones into bread, were it worth while, He could have cast Himself down from the Temple top uninjured, if He wished for cheap and vulgar glory. But such acts were morally, Divinely impossible. For others in the extremity of need He might have performed both miracles, but for Himself never. Had He stooped so low He would have renounced His eternal work and abdicated His Godhead. Such a course is inconceivable, when we bear in mind Christ's own statements and His own definition of



the highest spiritual life. “*He that findeth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for My sake shall find it.*” Here we have the programme, the policy of Heaven, the very innermost law according to which it works and works out infinite and supreme results. *Nulla salus extra crucem—nulla vita sine morte—nulla pax nisi ex bello.* And again *vita via*, and *mors janua vitae*. There has never been a religion, something more than a mere form, which has not had some glimpse or glimmer though infinitely remote of this stupendous strife and fundamental cosmic fact—call it what we will—salvation, apotheosis, consummation, through Vicarious Suffering. Self is only realised and realisable in others. Thus does God justify Himself and vindicate His moral government, and thus does man discover He is Divine. Of course, if we choose, we can repudiate the testimony of our own experience and the evidence of history, and declare the truth is no truth. But in this way we stultify ourselves and put ourselves to endless confusion. Queen Mary Tudor is sometimes said to have said, that, after her death, the name Calais would be found engraven on her heart. And on the heart of the most virulent opponent of the light, nay, if it might be, even on the heart of Anti-christ himself, is written for good or evil, the Cross of Christ. We cannot go outside our experience, we cannot get away from cosmic principles. And if we refuse to confront the facts, we thereby condemn ourselves and our idle speculations to a sterile circle of impotence and the treadmill of futility.

Even those who are loudest in their denunciations of Vicarious Suffering, as unreasonable and immoral, the very men and women who would if they could, tear this brightest jewel from the Saviour's crown, are often the men and women who by domestic virtues and philanthropic enterprises constitute the most splendid refutations in practice of their own preaching. They bear the blessed Cross in their lives, while their lips thunder curses against the doctrine. Their own glorious self-denial is their own glorious self-assertion. After all, there exists a great deal of beautiful faith in the fiercest Agnosticism, and the most rabid unbelievers extract at least as much comfort from the Unknowable as we do from the Knowable. Mystery should be no stumbling block, at any rate to men of science and thinkers. For everything, sooner or later, becomes more or less unintelligible, but not therefore less true. Yes, and even at the very outset of things, directly we penetrate beneath the surface, we reach the inexplicable. But that proves to be, upon the deepest reflection, the very bedrock of the universe. The foundations are laid in eternal darkness, but on the mountain tops in spite of the besetting cloud (and because of the besetting cloud) though we fear with a natural fear as we enter into it, the light never sets. We have always stars and landmarks to steer by. *Nautis aperitur Apollo.*

Yet, in the face of this everlasting verity, interwoven in the cosmic framework and constitution of things, we find theologians sublimely unconscious of their own bearings and best arguments and

lightly giving the whole Gospel away by dangerous and deadly admissions. As if they had not mastered the elements of their case. And here again we see, as always, the unwise advocate who does not know his brief is far more damaging by his airy and easy surrenders than the antagonist of the cause. Science is science and occupies its own legitimate sphere, and employs its own legitimate methods or instruments. But one cannot paint or lay colour on with a trowel, and cut diamonds with a hatchet. And again problems will remain problems for ever and ever, until they are rightly restated. So theologians should at any rate understand their proper field of labour and what has to be proved and what has to be safeguarded. And many timid commentators and divines have been so fearful about their orthodoxy and so anxious to retain miracles, that they have acknowledged them where they never existed. Heaven save the poor Church from such irrelevant and destructive confessions of faith. Why invoke the *deus ex machina* when no such violent intervention is demanded or required? If the true explanation has been given in the Gospel itself, why go afar to introduce (to drag in by cart-ropes) a bootless and barren thau-maturgic display?

We read in St. John viii. 59, "*Then took they up stones to cast at Him: but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the Temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.*" We may compare with this the incident at Nazareth, when they "*rose up and thrust Him out of the city, and led*

*Him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast Him down headlong. But He, passing through the midst of them, went His way."* And the Gospel which creates the difficulty, gives the key and provides the proper and obvious solution, in St. John v. 13. "*And He that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed Himself away, a multitude being in that place.*" No miracle evidently was wrought in any one of the three recorded instances. The safest hiding-place, it has often been said and truly said, lies in a crowd. Jews dressed all very much in the same way and never shaved except for vows. Jesus also had many supporters who sympathised with Him in secret and openly. And in a crowd, and a Teacher or Hakim like Him would always be followed by disciples and curious critical hearers, the door of escape (nay, numerous doors of escape) stood ready wide open. Christ wanted no miracle to make Him invisible. In the crowd—"a multitude being in that place"—He was in a moment invisible, swallowed up and lost among hundreds of similar units. Friends would of course conceal His Presence with their own persons, and to His enemies He would be frequently a stranger and imperfectly known. Nothing, then, would be easier than to elude ignorant pursuit—"going through the midst of them." Even at Nazareth, we read the same explanation. Though there His Face must have been familiar to most, the numbers that attacked Him proved really His safety and not a source of peril. "*But He, passing through the*

*midst of them, went His way."* Why then manufacture a serious problem, when the elucidation offered us is both true and adequate? We venture to say far more than this. For in the fierce light of the Temptation it seems absolutely certain that our Lord would have considered any miracle wrought for His Personal security a betrayal of His awful trust, a breach of the principle by which alone He not merely gave, but was Salvation for us and for all, and even an act of sin. It is not saying too much, it is not travelling beyond the limits of severe truth, to say that theologians who teach that Jesus wrought a miracle to extricate Himself from danger commit the unpardonable offence of turning the Sinless into the sinful Redeemer. It was the crowning glory of the Buddha to have been an erring man among erring men and by his own private lapses to have learned at first hand the hatefulness of sin. But from the first Christology has taken the one Scriptural position that Jesus, though He was "*made sin*" (a sin-offering) "*for us who knew no sin,*" yet never in word or deed or thought or feeling yielded or could have yielded to the temptations of any sordid or selfish enticement. He was tempted or He would not have been human. He "*was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin,*" but He refused to submit His will to such solicitings. Presented to and in His consciousness the evil allurements certainly must have been, but it was never represented there as a thing dear and desirable. "*Perfect through suffering*" and over temptation, "*He is able to succour them*

*that are tempted.*” A Saviour, however great and good and beautiful, who saves himself, is not a Saviour at all. And if we are to believe, as theologians would have us believe, that Christ stooped to negate His very office and Nature and wrought three contemptible miracles for mere Personal deliverance, then the entire fabric of Christianity with redemption collapses like a house of cards. Concessions of this kind undermine the bases of our faith. The defence of miracles here amounts to an attack from the inside upon our religion, and a sacrifice of the title-deeds. Well may the Church fear the enemies of her own household, in these misguided zealots who posing as friends give up the keys of the sacred citadel to her opponents, and think that thus they are jealous for her honour and their Master’s and do God service. Salvation has no meaning, unless it means the Cross. And we empty the Cross of all content, when we violate its first principles and take away its “offence” and transform or degrade it into a matter of compromise or conscience or self-seeking. Christ came just to offer up in a daily offering, of which Calvary was but the last link or term, His Life for others. And the assertion that He ever broke or stained this glorious service of Self-immolation by a piece of common jugglery and by making Himself invisible, displays a singular fatuity and a startling ignorance of His work. In uncanonical books we do find such acts attributed to Him, and the stigma stamps them at once as uninspired. But from Revelation we expect and we receive a very different testimony.

There is no congruity between such puerile exhibitions of power and the attested conduct of our Lord. The miracle-mongers of this kind and the Divine Sufferer, who felt the extremes of hunger and thirst and labour and weariness, and sorrow and pain, have no common ground and no common measure. But, it may be urged as a forlorn argument, the Saviour did work these miracles undoubtedly for the sake of His disciples and not for Himself. To this we reply at once, that the disciples on these three occasions ran no risk to themselves, and were not attacked. And there is nothing in any of the Gospel narratives to prove they ever were in any danger until the closing scene in Gethsemane.

Christianity begins and ends, stands or falls, with the doctrine of Vicarious Suffering, that it is our privilege as it was that of Jesus to live and die for others. The whole Gospel lies in a nutshell—" *He saved others, Himself He cannot save.*" Freedom in service, life by death, the daily burden of the Cross and its self-realisation through self-sacrifice. Theology should at least be consistent and logical. To accept a portion of the Truth and to refuse the rest of the doctrine, through which alone it stands complete and harmonious and justified, seems a suicidal theology. Christ could not both save Himself and save others, and He never did so. And no deadlier blow has been struck at the root of Redemption than the fatal inability to see it honestly and see it wholly. In these days and when part after part of the Bible has been whittled away, not in the interests of theo-

logy, but of theory, under a false appeal to the sacred name of free inquiry, we can ill afford to surrender more, especially when it happens to be of the essence of our faith and in organic and vital union with what we hold nearest and dearest of all our most precious possessions. Let the cloud of selfishness for one moment, or in the faintest degree, cast the shadow of a shadow over the Saviour's life, and it loses immediately its unique inspiration. His Death then is no Atonement and the Cross becomes at the utmost a sublime metaphor. And our Christianity descends to the level of a poem or a dream.

But the profound truth of Vicarious Suffering would possess but little meaning, unless taken in connection with its antithesis and complement, namely Self-preservation. It is at once obvious that, unless this last principle operated as a check and counterpoise, the race must speedily become extinct. Here we have no apology for a cowardly selfishness, the abject egotism that in defending and securing its own life at all costs forfeits the very reason for existence. This is not self-preservation but self-destruction. Asceticism, that very well may be and often has been an edifying example of devotion and altruistic sacrifice, that certainly presents a wide field of useful labours for the few and the fit, yet runs a risk of degenerating into a sanctified and inglorious egotism. Self-preservation, to be of any practical and permanent service, must be self-preservation not for oneself but for others. Look at our Saviour's own behaviour in this direction. "*When Jesus therefore perceived that they*



would come by force to make Him a King, He departed again into a mountain Himself alone." And again, we may quote another instance, after the beheading of John the Baptist. "When Jesus heard of it, He departed thence by ship into a desert place apart." Now in both these cases there was no danger to our Lord, and His conduct bore no reference to any regard for His own Personal safety. This could not be in question then. Yet it was a splendid display of the vital importance of Self-preservation—for others. Precious lives are idly squandered every year, and perhaps every day, from lack of attention to this great qualifying rule. Each act of each Christian should undoubtedly be a little altar of whole-hearted surrender for any whom we can help by the offering, but if we make this rule excessive by wanton abuse of our powers we do neither them nor God service. Talents of body and mind and spirit, talents of wealth and leisure and sympathy, were never bestowed on us to be wasted and to expire in the blaze of a brief prodigal magnificence. When our Saviour perceived the approach of a crisis that could abbreviate His Ministry and impair His usefulness, He withdrew from the world into a temporary seclusion. In this attitude we discover a Divine Selfishness. Labour, suffering, healing, witnessing, teaching and preaching, were all, if we may venture to speak in earthly figures, more congenial to Him. But for the sake of sinners, for the sake of His disciples, for the sake of His friends and the Jews His enemies, retirement and repose were for a season necessary. *Nulla crux, O*

*quanta crux!* The hardest, heaviest Cross to Him was having none, when all the immensity of His human and Divine Love cried out for action and sacrifice and daily death. The unquenchable thirst for Self-immolation impelled Him to face the ordeal of popular enthusiasm in its misdirected zeal, or confront the paralysis of national depression at the martyrdom of a prophet, but the resolve of Self-preservation for others dictated a retreat into the hill country or desert. We have not merely to guard against the invasion of the bad, but the encroachment of the good when it would clash with something better. *Le meilleur est toujours l'ennemi du bien.*

Vicarious sacrifice, if it stood alone, would simply be sublime foolishness. It might be beautiful, perhaps, always, but when the element of foolhardiness or irrelevancy or misdirection enters it incurs the hazard of becoming ridiculous. Don Quixote might be a valorous knight, in spite of his assaults on windmills, but he could never be a saviour of society. We want something better than honour and chivalry for this. They may be, they are, very respectable human attributes, but they are not Divine. They have an earthly basis and an earthly leaven. To call God "honourable" or "chivalrous," would be absurd—nay, it would be positively profane. But any man might be distinguished by the application of such epithets. Yet, on the other hand, we can speak of a Suffering Saviour, or a Self-sacrificing Saviour without offence and in the language of admiration or adoring love. The

philanthropist who, probably not without a little latent desire for notoriety, takes off his coat and puts it upon the shivering beggar in rags who immediately pawns it for a tenth of its value for baser delights, or the Lady Bountiful who with her own fair hands carries the dinner from her table to the lusty whining mendicant at her door—both of these may be very benevolent in their deeds of self-denial, but they are both merely Quixotic.

It is needless now to elaborate this point in the economy of Nature, as it forms one of the common-places of books that deal with the subject and constitutes one of the most interesting chapters. Mimicry of animals, their protective colouring and defensive characters for the furtherance of self-preservation, abound and superabound in the narratives of competent observers. But what is vaguely and dimly and imperfectly conscious here and partially developed, in the kingdom of Nature as differentiated for the sake of convenience from the world of man, emerges as definitely and deliberately conscious in the Kingdom of Grace. The impulse for self-sacrifice and vicarious suffering common to martyrs and confessors of the faith and all the highest types of humanity, whether pioneers of the Gospel or of Science, the exponents of a new creed or a new grammar, who would die for the rejection or retention of a single letter, for an *iota* more or an *iota* less, as Christianity slowly evolves itself and Culture (even the most Agnostic Culture) surely absorbs something of its complexion, has to fight with a conflicting power or principle that forbids

absolute and unprofitable suicide. At the beginning of any particular civilisation, east or west, north or south, classical or Christian, we find a preponderance of the ill-regulated devotion. Waves of fanaticism, frequently heroic and lovely fanaticism, lay hold of a community and convulse it to its innermost depths. Society is shaken to its foundations from centre to circumference. Candidates for the glory of martyrdom follow each other in rapid succession, and all ranks catch the infection of the divine frenzy. Women and children, the frailest and the fairest and the youngest go singing to their fate, and endure the most agonising tortures with the rapture of bride and bridegroom. They fall in love with death and mount the scaffold as a monarch mounts the throne. And no new cause, no new crusade, religious or non-religious, would exist a day without the awful engineering energy of this irresponsible initiative, which counts no cost and heeds no consequences and marches straight onward, and with the rapture of its faith desiccates seas and creates dry land, and accepts flooded rivers and frowning battlemented walls as but daily steps or stepping stones in the pathway of progress. But, as the Gospel prevails and penetrates both masses and classes, as Culture broadens and deepens, these passionate paroxysms of spiritual enthusiasm, choosing death in preference to life and making a festival of martyrdom, though they never can disappear altogether, still tend to grow fewer and fewer. They begin to recognise the qualifying antagonistic factor of self-preservation. It was

always present, at the very origin of the civilising movement, though more or less latent and held in abeyance by the fresh young forces of devotion which demand the surrender of life and the offering of blood. The aggressive fury of a fresh belief, supposed to be sent direct from heaven, burning and bursting with sacred fire, kept for a while in the background this cold and calculating principle. But there it lay all along, waiting its time for intervention, mustering its strength, husbanding its resources, till the first fervour of an iconoclastic enthusiasm abated, and the destructive process gave place to the constructive. And yet, to be of any enduring worth, it ever was and it ever will be, with increasing effect, Self-preservation only for others.

Sin stands condemned, not only as an offence against God, but as a breach in the cosmic order and therefore a sin against the individual and the race, that cannot be divided, or rather are perpetually divided towards the achievement of a higher spiritual synthesis. And the Shakers and Mormons and Dancing Dervishes, and even the new American Salii as represented by Brother Hubbard in his perspiring piety and hideous saltatory services, approach the truth nearer, though thousands of miles away from it, than those religious egomaniacs whose sole conception of Christianity is to secure themselves and their squalid souls. The worshipper, with but one idea, to be sound or safe or saved, or whatever be the last pitiful expression of a beggarly belief, commits the worst possible and

worst conceivable kind of sin. His creed amounts to nothing but a cowardly and contemptible self-preservation for himself. We cannot denounce too strongly or sternly this infamous caricature of a religion that begins and ends and exists but in the Cross. It exhibits the methods of an Insurance Society and the morals of a fiend. What did S. Paul say? "*For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.*" What is even the teaching of the Old Testament? Moses said "*Yet now, if Thou wilt forgive their sin—and if not, blot me, I pray Thee out of Thy book.*" Here we find the ethics, the religion, of thousands of years ago, immeasurably superior to that creeping, crawling caterwauling orthodoxy, which so long as the individual is saved, cares not if the whole world be damned.

## IX

### THE GREAT RECONCILIATION

EVERY step we take is an arrested fall, in the case of adults. And for children, just beginning to walk, every step is an unarrested fall, until they have acquired the ability to balance themselves in motion and though perpetually on the edge of lapsing from the upright state rarely to lapse indeed. Grown up people are quite unconscious of the many antagonisms and correspondences, check against check, that go to regulate the simplest piece of progress, though it be but the passage from one room to another. A whole system of the most complicated machinery with countless inter-relations, part drawing against part, and yet all pulling together towards one and the same simple result, is liberated even if we only cross the road. But what concerns us just now may be stated briefly. Every act of locomotion appears to be, not merely a figure of eight movement, as Dr. Pettigrew's observation appears to prove, but also and especially a conflict between the standing and falling positions. We stand because we fall forward, and our onward walk is the effective resultant of two competing forces—that which drags us down, and that which

raises us up. To put it simply, we could not stand unless we fell, and we could not walk unless we did both acts and repeated them in our continued progress. We have the counterpoise of opposite powers issuing in a new and higher fact.

Exactly the same process occurs in moral advances, and religious developments. Man's spiritual lapses are continually ascents and not descents, because in the long run and final account of things he falls upward and not downward. The ethical sense, as history shows us in the experience of individuals and in the experience of nations, grows by reiterated defeats and reiterated recoveries in the everlasting warfare between right and wrong, truth and falsehood, good and evil, and even the battle between contending virtues struggling for the pre-eminence at particular times in particular places and by particular ways. The useful *amoeba*, our accepted ancestor in a long and singular line of pedigree, at the dim dawn of life, when creative energy seemed blindly groping its way through grotesque and humble forms towards the sun-blaze of Dantes and Shakespeares, was darkly feeling for something more and something better when it established some sort of connection with a nebulous world outside and proceeded, however slowly and feebly to individuate itself from others. The resistance perceived, and recognised as a working fact, out of constant collisions and failures, giving and taking, finding and losing, progress and retrogression, was really the nucleus of all future morality and contained the germ of the religious Simeon



revival in Cambridge and the Oxford (Church) Movement. Without eternal contests, there could have been and would have been no Pascal, no Newman, no Loisy. "*The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.*" Chaos and order fought for the mastery, and light and darkness met in the death grip which was the promise and prophecy of civilisation. There must be two terms, two factors, at the ultimate analysis upon which to work—the two sides, the two ends, the two pieces of the Cross. Without subject and object in unceasing belligerency we shall have no action and reaction, and nothing but the stable equilibrium of corruption that feeds upon itself. Production or productiveness demands the endless duel between growth and decay. Subject and object, for ever agreeing to disagree and disagreeing to agree, may only thus define and explain and realise themselves in each other by this sublime negation. "*Most gladly therefore,*" said St. Paul, "*I will rather glory in my infirmities, that the Power of Christ may rest upon me.*" The mighty apostle had read the riddle of philosophy, he knew the secret of life, and practised what he preached in a glorious missionary life of protracted martyrdom. He saw we must keep fighting, if we would live and grow and become Christly ourselves. And he touched the innermost core of the truth, when he boldly declared the astounding paradox that in his weakness lay his strength, in his beggary his wealth, and in overthrows his victories. He had been taught at the Cross, by the crucifixion of the flesh and the denial

of self, that in these apparent defects or disasters resided the raw materials for a better triumph and a deeper, broader evolution. Poverty was his bride, sorrow a daily sacrament, pain his brother. He had learned, at the sword's point of perpetual conflict, the ideal will be always more real than reality and more natural than Nature, and the human and even the historical in the grandest forms never existed and never can exist as mortal on earth but are written in the secret chronicles of souls and registered in the heavenlies. Life, spiritual life, he knew was the sum of our moral antagonisms. Individuality, he would have said, was the outward character which separated us *from* others and therefore by the fundamental law of contradiction *to* others in ourselves. While personality was the inward character, "*the hidden man of the heart*," that separated us *from* God, and therefore in ourselves *to* God. And the individuality and personality together compose the total amount of our being in their relationships and antagonisms. The soul thus keeps drawing nearer and nearer to God by an endless contradiction, in which it justifies itself and manifests Him. How clearly our Lord proclaimed this fact, the most superficial reader must be well aware. "*And a man's foes shall be they of his own household.*" Character, moral force, spiritual initiative, can arise and expand simply out of the divided house and the civil war in the heart. Temptation resisted and overcome means a great deal more than the bare words seem to connote, and was never and never will be a pure

blind negation. The positive contents of the transaction are indefinitely vast or practically infinite. The vice, the fault, the error, the obliquity, when fairly conquered becomes an ally, a servant, a friend. By a moral transformation it is revolutionised and built into the edifice of the soul, it becomes material for the foundations or the walls. No sin even may be wasted. Nature is parsimonious, God is economical. And by adding to a defect or subtracting from an excess and above all by giving the right direction, He takes our very vilest qualities and moulds them afresh. He passes them through the flames of eternal Love, He who is "*consuming fire*," and brings them forth as blessings and joys, to enter in the jewelled ramparts of New Jerusalem.

Combinations out of resolution and dissolution, to be broken up again for re-combinations, in grand cosmic rhythm, physical, mental, moral, religious—such appears to be the way of the universe, as reflected in our experience. The deepest impression of the consciousness, when we travel farthest back, is antithesis, and nothing evidently can be known except in terms of contradiction which only states itself to be absorbed in a wider unity. In the offence (or antagonism) of the Cross and in Christ alone all mysteries are solved, all problems settled, all connexions grounded, all enigmas opened, and all truths find their full value and virtue and sanction. And we are thereby elevated by agreement in difference to still higher reconciliations of Calvary on Calvary. God is and must be a jealous God,

and this we soon discover to be the attitude of Nature. "*Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.*" And the Trial of Jealousy recorded in the book of Numbers, exactly expresses the main aspect of the Divine Government. Life approaches us, step by step, and stage by stage, as a series of ordeals or disciplinary combats to elicit the best in us and fortify our characters. Every breath we draw should be a sort of vital experiment, every pace should be a moral probation, testing our powers and establishing our position. Each judgment we form must be an appeal to the decision of the sword. The arbitrament of battle is the price we pay for all our acquisitions, for more liberty and more knowledge and more suffering. God gives us most when He takes away most. He reveals Himself just by hiding Himself, and the revelation of darkness proves the revelation of light. "*Verily Thou art a God that hidest Thyself, O God of Israel the Saviour.*" The way of the Maker with His child, to say it with all reverence, resembles the way of a maid with a man. He withdraws to entice us, He denies that He may bestow all that He possibly can. Refusals signify His choicest favours, and when He would attract He repels. We are *emptied* by Him in order to be filled, made beggars and bankrupts in perpetual impoverishments to be enriched for ever. Out of our frailties God weaves the royal raiment of Kings and in our grossest infirmities and imperfections He lays the foundation stones of His eternal temple. We are fed by

famishing, and stripped and starved to be clothed and nourished. Omnipotence realises itself in the spiritual might of spiritual meekness. St. Paul, to quote his experience again, exhibited this sublime truth in its fairest fulness. “ *I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound; everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*” He recognised boldly the infinite and everlasting contradiction of things, the hostile flesh and the hostile world, and the Divine Adversary who fought against him thus to render him worthy of the Divine friendship. Every new provocation unfolded itself at last as a new proof of God’s Love, and even the repeated challenges of evil all helped, though out of disaster and defeat and death, to bring in the new Creation and the new heaven and earth of righteousness. St. Paul testified, as few have done, to the terrible reality of the battle-ground in his moral consciousness, where spirit and flesh, Grace and Nature, perpetually struggled for predominance. And none has described the contest in more vivid language. “ *For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.*” No chapter written by man has been more sadly abused than this, as if we could avoid the imputation of evil, which after all did not concern or injure the soul. The spirit and the flesh accordingly have been treated as dis-

tinct from each other, like separate watertight compartments. And the apostle, from this point of view, anticipated the latest and best design of modern shipbuilding. He might almost have been laying down the lines of a new battleship. But this perverse interpretation of St. Paul's witness to the unceasing moral fight, carefully omits the chief actor or protagonist, namely, the will of man. To argue that the spirit is independent of the acts of the flesh, and uninterested in and unaffected by them, gives the lie direct to human nature and our universal knowledge. Unless the will consented actively, or stood passively aloof and in abeyance, unless it co-operated positively or negatively, the principle of evil would be impotent. And the very quintessence of sin consists in this, not the defeat when we are overcome by wrong after a stern strife more or less protracted, but when we refuse the very conditions of our existence and decline to fight at all. This attitude places us lower than the meanest organism with the feeblest pulse of life, whether *protozoa* or *protophyta* or their connecting links. They, at any rate, can and do fight for their own hand, if they can do little or nothing else. Even the rolling moss, when all moisture fails and drought lies heavy upon it, seems able to detach itself from one *habitat* and finds wings in the wind that transport it to another in the presence or neighbourhood of water. Refusal to fight lowers a man to the level of a mineral or a vegetable, a stock or a stone. The rolling moss will not tamely succumb without an effort, and contends to the last against

overwhelming odds. And in a world of militant units, the soldier, whether man or microbe, or molecule, that will not fight is lost, and commits the one unpardonable sin. On reflection, if we analyse the constituents of any moral lapse, we shall find among its fateful contents the most fateful is evading the wager of battle, which confronts us all alike. Moreover the defaulting soldier, who retires to the rear or attempts to hide himself behind his figleaves or fiction, neither gains a conquest thus nor escapes the inexorable issues. Justice appears to be the twin brother of evil, and relentlessly follows to avenge the misdeeds done. He may often seem blind and lame, but he arrives at length, and makes no mistakes :

“*Raro antecedentem scelestum  
Deseruit pede Poena claudo.*”

Only we now, in the light of the Gospel, should read instead of “*raro*” the truer word “*nunquam*.” To evade the fight in the present, or to sin, means simply to postpone the struggle to the future and face severer penalties.

Assuming, as everyone must now, the progressive character of revelation and light that gradually emerges from the clash of competing factors, beginning with the first fire-cloud of primeval palpitating ether which was only a fresh departure from an older and earlier system, we understand that nothing is or can be perfectly clear to us. Evil, for instance, the original and most comprehensive of terms, remains still an insoluble mystery. It declines to

be compressed within the mould of any definition, however convincing and apparently complete. The ultimate meaning for ever defies us. Its disguises are many, and the angel of darkness frequently looks when closely examined more like an angel of light. We must never confound evil with sin. Physical, mental, moral, spiritual, it takes a multitude of transformations and never continues in one stay. Sometimes it errs by defect, and sometimes it errs by excess. God Himself in the Bible proudly claims the authorship, as if it were part of the protoplasmic material in which He delighted to work. And the hand of Omnipotence, to say it with bowed head and bated breath, seems like the dyer's hand occasionally dyed and stained with its complexion. We measure evil by degrees, but some evils merge in the final outcome like supremely blessed goods and not evils. Who, with the most rudimentary experience of life within him and without him, will venture for a moment to dispute the incontestable fact, that so-called evils like suffering and sorrow and pain are frequently not only essential benefits but immediate? It seems, on more profound and accurate consideration, that we want a new vocabulary or at least new definitions of many old terms, intended to express certain fundamental truths which they merely murder or obscure. Whatever evil may be, it cannot possibly be all bad. The world, quite as clearly as the Church, acknowledges this fact. Evil may be imperfect or qualified or incipient good, or good in the making or sometimes just good out of season and place. And here we



may find a sort of partial solution, in the relativity of things. Inopportune "good" may be worse than any evil, and opportune "evil" may be better than any "good," as one man's meat is another man's poison, and the blessing for a child might be a curse for the adult. Evil, at a particular time or spot, and for a particular state or stage of a particular person's moral evolution, may be and often is unmitigated good. It seems sad and humiliating but we must confess it, that though the Scriptures proclaimed the fact from the outset of written revelation, yet the pagan world before Christ and the unbelieving world since Christ, has readily received always and published this truth. To cite Horace alone, in the "*splendide mendax*" and the "*splendidus error*," we have a faithful and luminous witness to the good of evil at times and its awful nobility. Milton, in his portrait of Satan throughout *Paradise Lost* has quite innocently and unwillingly yielded precisely the same testimony. It follows then, logically, that in dealing with facts incompletely understood and describing them in symbols or words which we feel to be painfully inadequate and but remotely or but metaphorically correct, we cannot expect clear and solid results. And the poet, who sang of "the supreme evil, God," was not so profane as he seemed.

Man, called "a compound of dirt and Deity," embraces certainly a human element and a Divine. The Incarnation of our Lord was and is the one great historical evidence of this tremendous truth. And the reconciliation at the Cross in Christ of these

two conflicting and yet by necessity complementary factors stands forth eternally as the pledge and promise of our own. Our Master fought on the same battlefield, fought with the same weapons, fought the same enemies, fought to the same end, and in the magnificent failure of His Life accomplished what no earthly successes have achieved. Armed with our mortality, clothed in our weakness, exposed to our temptations, He did not, like Buddha, glory in repentance, but took the sin and suffering around him, the extortion of the publican and the unchastity of the harlot, and out of this unlovely rubbish, as He quarried deeper than ever man quarried into the dregs of degraded humanity, He wrought a new humanity that was like Himself Divine. St. Paul discovered this. "*O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.*" The mighty Apostle, equally great as a sinner and as a saint, under the pressure of the dreadful distraction of the daily contradiction which he carried about with him in his body, sought and found the mediating term in Christ crucified alone. *He* was, *He* is, the single satisfaction, the solitary Atonement. Two in ourselves, divided against ourselves, we recover, we realise the lost or unestablished unity in Him, by living His life to death and dying His death to life. Calvary, and nothing but Calvary, provides the key and proves the remedy.

"*My brethren, count it all joy, when ye fall into divers temptations*" or trials. St. James assuredly saw no evil here. As an officer in the army of the

Church Militant he could form no other conception, and advocate no lesser teaching. We are to be “winnowed *in*,” and not according to Messrs. Romanes and Mallock “winnowed *out*”; yes, “winnowed *in*” to the Kingdom of God, though nothing but chaff at the outset. For the threshing of the Divine Tribulation, by some moral magic or spiritual alchemy, transmutes the base metal or dross into gold, and turns the very dust of the granary into rich grain. “*And this is the Father’s will which hath sent Me, that of all which He hath given me I should lose nothing.*” The weak love that merely expresses itself in emotional tenderness, and perhaps overflows in idle tears, that begins and ends in soft words and unmeaning caresses, has nothing in common with the gracious cruelties of Divine Love. The friend who can offer but empty praises or excuses, when we have failed in duty—if Mr. Garrod will permit so immoral an expression—only betrays his sacred trust, and acts as an enemy. Refining comes from the crucible of the everlasting conflict, redemption out of every cross borne for Christ’s sake. For the Passion revealed itself in time, not to relieve us from doing or suffering, but to armour and enable us to undergo the same ordeal—according to our measure. And at the Cross, where our Lord keeps perpetual tryst, we meet Him and unite with Him and share the privileges of pain, in daily death the price of daily liberty and life. Thither, too, the world repairs, at each fresh budding point or new beginning, to renew its youth and realise itself in God.

## X

### CHURCH AND WORLD

God governs the world by appointments and disappointments, through the perpetual warfare of the critical with the creative faculty, and keeps drawing us closer and closer to Himself by a process of separation which only accomplishes at last a vital union and communion. For the Cross at once divides and combines. Mere happiness, the fond dream of poets and philosophers and even saints, was never intended to be our goal. It is really but the grave of all our highest powers and parts, and the aspirations that are inspirations. Reflection convinces us that in the Divine Economy of Grace, spiritual development or more life and loftier life emerges as the goal of the human race. The ordinary Elysium of happiness, even immaterial happiness, if nothing more and just an end in itself, instead of being an upward and onward step in an eternal series, stands condemned immediately on consideration as a fool's paradise. What we discern as the cosmic principle or ultimate basis of all things appears to be movement, work, progress, by militant states. We ascend and descend continually, but we descend simply to ascend again.

Nature, the world, even God Himself, is at once the tomb and the womb of everything, and this as far as we can comprehend without any assignable limit. The sign *Thau*, the Cross, seems stamped on the whole of the universe, above and below, within and without. It offers the clue to our interpretation of each mystery that besets us, and when we would shrink from the shadow of the unequal contest, we are compelled to read its inscription. *In hoc signo vinces.*

It is pitiful to hear the constant admission of defeat going up to Heaven everywhere like the wail of a departing God, in the blurred and broken records of contemporary Church chronicles. Whether we turn to Mr. Charles Booth's monumental labours and the testimony yielded by London, or the Rev. Richard Free's bitter experiences told by "Seven Years Hard" in the Isle of Dogs, or leave the town and ask the witness of the country, we are still confronted by the same forlorn confession of impotence and failure. Yes, the Church, though officered by her best men and most enthusiastic champions, has proved powerless to reach the masses and touch the hearts of the people. Believing in her Divine mission and mandate, and armed with all the authority of holy sacraments and immemorial usages, and the ever new message of the Gospel, she cannot grapple either with the passionate opposition of the world or the far more fatal dead weight of inertia, or apathy and indifference. The prisons are full and the churches are empty. The last new senseless or immoral popular ballad crowds the music halls

and places of amusement to the point of suffocation, while the grandest truth that can be uttered remains unheeded or invites ridicule or receives hostile attacks. Has the mental axis of man changed so that he is no longer able to entertain the Christian creed fairly and adequately as he once did? Are our modes of living and our ways of thinking so different now, that we really cannot help being unjust against our will and knowledge to the old Story of the Cross? Have we, in our commercial greed and scientific inquiry, wandered away too far from the Oriental vision and the Oriental voice in its foreign Syrian setting to appreciate now the force and the fact that undertook to conquer the world? Is this contemporary coldness of ours simply the revenge of time, the natural and inevitable reaction in the awful rhythm of thought, the recoil of the Occidental mind on its own Occidental methods, that will issue at last in a gigantic cleavage between the two antagonistic hemispheres, a contradiction rooted in some fundamental necessity of things? Can there ever be any true permanent sympathy between such radically divided worlds, with such contrary ideals and ambitions? We may say at once that the difficulty does not lie here, and the ancient antagonism of feelings and tastes and fears so different from each other, presents the most hopeful sign and promise of eventual reconciliation. *Coelum non animum mutant qui trans mare currunt.* After all, in spite of surface and even interior disagreements, human nature at bottom is very much the same everywhere,

at all times and in all places. Souls, in their essence and elemental bearings, vary little whether east or west of Suez, if we only go deep enough, *πνευματικῶς πνευματικὰ συγκρίνοντες*. The same antithesis is the same synthesis. A vulgar misapprehension will soon reveal itself as accounting for all the seeming unsuccess of the Church. Critics have been discussing the question utterly and entirely in the dark, with an ignorance that would be unpardonable if it were not universal, and in the highest seats even more than in the lowest. The whole matter has been and is an *ignoratio elenchi*.

The course of Church history has been just what might and should have been antecedently expected. Given such a creed and such materials to work upon, and a philosopher should *à priori* have been able to predict every stage in the evolution, the cold and hot fits or obsessions, down to the movement of "passive resistance" at any price, even at the price of active hostility. As, at the very commencement of human records whether sacred or secular, God still works in one and the same manner. He governs the world, He educates it, by Election or Selection, through the competition of the few against the many, classes against masses, individuals against bulk and brute force. Quantity in itself means nothing, and a single thought weighs more than the matter of the whole stellar universe. The process towards improvement in evolution is purely qualitative. "*For many are called but few are chosen.*" Not only are the leaders and teachers, the reformers and pioneers,

the captains of intelligence and industry alike, the protagonists of suffering and princes of sorrow, but scanty in number, as they always must be, but the followers or disciples also influenced by these splendid specimens of the human race are and will be scanty and share in that glorious and God-like isolation of thought, by which the world with all its antagonism is spiritually leavened. Time, like quantity, conveys no significance whatever to the soul. And the very paucity of the Christ-loving and Christ-like individuals rightly considered, is the most triumphant proof that the Church's work is Divine and carried on now along the lines which the Master Himself established. The foolishness of the Cross, the foolishness of preaching, we may venture to say the foolishness of God and His faithful few, must ever overcome the wisdom of the world. The dynamic heart of fire, in the breast of weakness, that is spiritual meekness, carries a more tremendous energy in its truth than any crude might, however crowned or propped by bayonets. And, had we eyes to see and minds to understand, we should perceive the Cross of Christ victorious now, not in spite of the empty churches and crowded pothouses and prisons or reformatories, but because of them and through them and by their instrumentality as the needful foil or contrast and counterpart. These gross materials are but the common clay of which the heavenly bricks will be fashioned in the fire. Love always wins, Truth always prevails, in the end, and they neither count the cost nor grudge the bitter means. And we



often, perhaps usually, choose to forget the infinite blessings of Christianity that indirectly reach the uttermost dregs and saturate the length and breadth and depth of all Society. *Vox in deserto claman-tis*. Yes, but the wilderness, if an empty church or a populous city, hears the voice though it does not listen and recognises it as an echo of eternity and receives in its most recondite and antipathetic recesses a vital and a saving impression. The drunken beast staggering in his prostituted strength from the tavern, to beat his wife and starve his children has yet somewhere in his degraded and brutalized being a spark of the divine fire, which, if only in other worlds, will eventually rise up in a reclaiming fact and a redeeming force. The impenitent thief or Magdalene, though not even at second hand or third hand, has nevertheless been spiritually affected by some ray of light that has filtered through a thousand errors and found a home at last in a hot-bed of corruption and impurity. The dynamic value of the Cross, in reactions and resistances and apparently crushing defeats, has not been realized yet. God is never in a hurry, He has no need. Besides, if the lesson Calvary has taught us is anything it is surely this. God works by failure, and not by success as we call it, and brings victory out of defeat. It is by his fools and paupers and nobodies that He conquers still and governs the world. We see it proved abundantly in politics every day, at least. For the Gospel is not a commercial speculation, warranted to produce a maximum of results with a minimum

of expenditure. On the contrary, it was and is and must be always a losing fight. "*He saved others, Himself He cannot save.*" Christ from the earthly point of view, stands forth as a Divine Failure, a miscarriage of Godhead. And so the Gospel is and must be also a failure, and that constitutes its sole chance of success. "*God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty, and base things of the world and things which are despised hath God chosen—yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are.*" We ask for outward and visible proofs and palatial evidences, jewelled walls and bulwarks, and all the pomp and circumstance of sordid and material magnificence. That is not God's method. He sends us adversities and misfortunes, broken hearts and lives, and by the hands of His lepers and outcasts and pariahs He regenerates the world, through the least promising and least powerful individuals. Christianity, therefore, is and ought to be a failure, just because Christ Himself was a Failure judged by normal standards. And yet this Divine Impotence, so to express it with all reverence, has begun slowly, silently, secretly, but surely, to transform the earth, even more by Agnostics than by believers. We forget that we possess exactly the same Gospel now and the same Cross guides and rules us, and we must accept the same process from the same principles with the same fruits. And here arises the difficulty. For the Church

that conquered the world has now in its turn been conquered (as far as this is possible) by the world, and formed with it an adulterous or rather incestuous union. Compromise and accommodation, excellent practices in their way, have gone to a pernicious extent, even to the sacrifice of living truths. Disestablishment, however painful, appears to be the sole logical position and remedy. The Church would be more and not less national, if the adulterous connexion with the State were severed, and if that artificial scaffolding were removed. Protection here, with the pious odour of an insidious Erastianism, seems clearly and indefensibly wrong. In the face of our Lord's unqualified proclamations such an alliance cannot be maintained for a moment, and when we remember the State was originally the child of the Church it becomes not merely unholy but positively incestuous. "*My kingdom is not of this world. The Kingdom of God is within you.*" It is impossible to escape the prohibitive pressure of these announcements, which condemn utterly and for ever any sort of institution such as a State Church. It may savour of paradox, but it remains perfectly true that the Church and the State would be much better friends if they were enemies. The union of the two reposes on a complete misconception of their respective functions. Each within their own province is supreme and each should be autonomous with their proper and peculiar courts ecclesiastical and civil. And a Church that is at the mercy of a chance division or snap vote in Parliament, can hardly be considered a

Church at all. That bastard progress, which in the name of light and liberty and for the sake of a false civilisation, hurrying it knows not and cares not whither except to accumulate wealth too costly to be enjoyed, is responsible for this misdevelopment of things. Better far to disestablish the Church than to disestablish her doctrines and spiritual powers. We are often told that there cannot be a dual Government, in the teeth of the impregnable fact that this is the way of the world and no other, and the cosmos could do nothing to any purpose and would arrive at no higher synthesis unless it were always and everywhere divided against itself in order to attain a better unity. Progress, while it boasts of its charters and increases of equality and opportunity for all, fears to allow the Church a free hand and in a Spartan spirit fetters the arm uplifted in blessing and gilds the chain. It seems really as if Society or Culture had not yet obtained a clear insight into the most elementary fact that the Church is a spiritual organisation and can recognise no laws imposed on it from without.

We often see and understand in a sense particular points laid before us. But they abide inoperative, because they are only grasped intellectually. To be vital and fruitful and lasting possessions, personally appropriated and absorbed and assimilated, verities must be spiritually recognised. They then become our intimate property, a portion of the soul's furniture. And the spiritual recognition carries with it another fact, and is indirectly a proof of and testimony to our immortal ancestry. On the physi-

cal plane, the human eye repeatedly observes without observing a host of little features, when the mind has not been concentrated upon them. Their very nearness and familiarity render them obscure or even invisible. But as soon as the attention is directed to them, and focussed upon them, we wonder we did not distinguish them before, when under the stress of scrutiny they assume almost startling proportions. And in the same way it may reasonably be questioned if most of us really assimilate many or indeed any of the simplest facts or principles. Learned mechanically in youth, by mere dull, constant repetition, before the intelligence could understand or the heart had awakened, they were soon relegated to the automatic sub-consciousness and grew into a part of the working machinery of the mind without meaning and without benefit. This irrational acceptance of other persons' conclusions causes half the confusion and mischief about us. Experience, that we borrow, without examination and without any personal justification may be possessed, but only as a barren and often fatal inheritance. The vast majority of people take the Church they find awaiting them, in the State leading strings, as they take the fact of maternity and the good things of life. It does not occur to them, that the connection may be wrong, and the Church has been shorn of her heavenly charters and sacred powers and thereby becomes an accomplice in the errors or evils of the State.

We may be certain that such an unhallowed and easy-going arrangement was never for a moment

entertained by the Divine Founder of the Church. He knew it must remain in the world, but was not to be of the world. It should live as an *imperium in imperio*, gradually leavening the whole lump by its eternal opposition to vice and fraud and violence and wrong of every description, thus strengthening itself and transforming all the competing secularities. The protest against sin would arise without ceasing, in true mercy sparing no offender and witnessing to the Presence of Christ in the sanctuary of His shrines, and in the daily ministration of the Word and Sacraments. The cheap and vulgar sneer at an official faith and stipendiary devotion would soon lose its sting, in lives religiously lived under the shadow of God's very throne. And a Church such as this, wedded to poverty and with no pecuniary prizes, would quickly weed out its unworthy servants, and merely retain those that sought not ease in Sion and worked not for honour and glory and worldly inducements, and aimed not at a sordid career, but at the conquest of sin. But the priest of the present day, whether beneficed clergyman or ecclesiastical dignitary, usually meets us just as a cultivated man of the world and member of polite society, who at certain seasons and in certain places wears a different dress and performs (and sometimes it is mere performance) particular duties for which he receives due emoluments. He contrives to make the best of both worlds, especially of this. And what could possibly be more dangerous for himself, and disastrous to the community than his success? He must move in the very best

circles, and why should he not indeed? But he enters it not as the representative or officer of a conquering Church—rather of a conquered Church. No doubt, we have glorious exceptions, and by these the fire is kept burning and the light shining, yet the rule remains in exact accordance with our statement. As captive Greece led captive her great conqueror, so the captive world speedily turned round and enslaved its conqueror. Now we have a fashionable Church for fashionable persons, and a worldly church for worldly congregations. Rites and ceremonies and vestments, and not the battle with sin, occupy and absorb the interest of idle clergymen as well as idle young ladies. The mental outfit of many spiritual guides now consists mainly of Church millinery. And the cut of a surplice or the colour of a stole will often reach hearts and raise emotions in people whom the moral earthquake would not touch if they were spectators. All because the Church has grown such a social success.

We do not want a Church that condones sin for a valuable consideration, and stands ready to excuse or explain away any scandalous offence, for a sufficient price. No, but we do ask for an army of fighting soldiers who are prepared to go anywhere and do anything for Christ's sake, and refuse to exercise their functions on the terms of the world and at the measurement of the world. Half the officers of the Church now seem ashamed of their colours, and act as if they desired to merge their character in the vapid effort of a general amiability

all round, and only strive for popularity. But they may be sure of this, that nobody respects them for their cowardice, and they are secretly despised by most. The bold confessor of the faith, who declines to conceal his office or his most cherished opinions, soon inspires a healthy regard followed by affection and wins souls. No wonder the working men stand aloof from the Church and are only tickled superficially and remotely by Settlements in the East End of London and elsewhere. “*The voice is Jacob’s voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau.*” The priest appears to them to preach one thing and practise another—perhaps not their own particular priest, but the ordinary average vicar or curate. He says one thing to them, and another thing to the Society which essentially conditions his every word and act and clings to him with a paralysing force. “*Ambiguos Troas metuo, Tyriosque bilingues.*” The double-tongued man, the hypocrite, the person who runs with the hare and hunts with the hounds, excites no confidence and commands no response to his most rhetorical appeals. English working men demand something very different. Behind the stalking horse of a flagrant philanthropy, and the precious baits dangled unblushingly before their eyes, they see not so much of the Cross as the badge of a party, the snare of a system, the iron mould of uniformity, and not the spacious speech and glory of a new life compelling them to come into the Kingdom of God. Enthusiasm, benevolence, alone will never stir the heart of working men with their strenuous ideals,



nor even the squalid magnificence of our idle and useless aristocracy. Absolute unvarnished sincerity is what both need, below the coarseness or the guilt, and both alike require to be reclaimed—the West perhaps considerably more than the East. When people do not take seriously what is said, and begin to make deductions and allow reservations for the professional point of view, the Gospel has lost its power. The simple cry of the Cross will ever pierce attentive souls and arrest their hearing. But the present necessity calls for less of the Church and more of the Christ, less of the apparatus and intercepting ceremonial and more of the Spirit. Not that the message of the Gospel at any one time can ever be interpreted in exactly the terms of any other time, because the needs vary. But the offer of Christ remains fundamentally the same, though it must be translated into the language of the period. “*Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*” “*I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.*” The working man now questions if Christ can give him any help, if Christ understands his wants and temptations or approves of his progress, and if the resurrection of the masses is really a vital fact involved in the beautiful and awful teaching of Easter. Of course, it may take many years and it will imply immense sacrifices, before the preachers of the new age have learnt the precise accent and proper shape of the doctrine to be delivered by them and accepted by the people. During a transition things naturally all seem at

cross purposes, they have not yet found their right respective places and settled down into their working channels. New centres of energy have arisen, new productive and distributing agencies, and the man and the message must equally be re-adapted to these fresh forms and influences. There must be a universal revision of methods, and a readjustment of the old machinery to the novel materials. "Let the great world spin for ever down the ringing grooves of change." When we consider the havoc wrought in the views of orthodoxy by Bible criticism, and the altered aspects of inspiration and revelation, the shattering of idols and the terrible modern purging of the Temple, the complete revolution in religious ideas, we may rather be surprised that the Cross still not only holds its ground but steadily, if sometimes almost imperceptibly, advances. The very fact of the outcry within the Church and without the Church, that it cannot cope with the present distress, should be a convincing proof of the contrary. We may be sure that the dead bones are beginning to move beneath the quickening breath of the Spirit and a new baptism of fire. Ah, if we look under the sin and sorrow of the world, the clash of conflicting passions, the discord of competing cries and interests, we shall find the soul itself of suffering is a great joy, which justifies an eternal optimism. The world may still *say* with warped lips, "*Not this Man, but Barabbas!*" Yet it really *means*, "*Vicisti, Galilae.*"

## XI

### UNION OF OPPOSITES

WHENEVER we attain to results that appear diametrically to contradict each other, we may be sure that the direction is divinely right, and we move in the immediate neighbourhood of some great new royal law and larger synthesis. Antagonism heralds the approach of God Himself, Jehovah Sabaoth. In the universal and inexplicable union of opposites alone, do we discover the real vast and varied and vital Truth, above and beyond the range or necessity of vulgar demonstration, those eternal intuitions which justify themselves as soon as they arise within consciousness and are their own sufficient proof. For instance, we believe God to be Perfect in Goodness as well as Almighty, and yet if we employ the empty logic of the schools, instead of the higher metaphysic of faith and love that transcend our blind blundering morality, we find it impossible to reconcile these two great attributes with the facts before us. Nature, life, experience, interpreted by the holy muddle of an arrested theology, seem to give the lie direct. God cannot be both one and the other. We are confronted by the common spectacle of weakness suffering rather than wickedness, and helpless inno-

cence nailed to its usual glorious cross. How then shall we attempt to explain such awful anomalies and such a flagrant defiance of the most elementary canons of justice? Right and reason, we might suppose, have no place or portion in a world that recognises no rule but that of brute force, and wallows in a weltering chaos of ethical confusion. But in a system governed by the fundamental law of antagonism, we should antecedently expect something of this sort, a perpetual conflict between the cosmic process and the moral process, which yet at bottom agree the most when the most apparently they clash with each other. But the battle would be idle and useless if it began and ended in mere fighting for fighting's sake. By no other way can spiritual strength and stability be evolved. Christianity is essentially the principle of Progress, because it alone provides the true impulse and inspiration for growth in character and a new cometary curve to humanity. And how shall we define it? We possess no clue excepting the Cross, and on the Cross we find the Innocent and Sinless Sufferer crucified. And if Calvary does not offer a solution for the problem of evil, nothing ever can or will. If our Lord Jesus Christ accepted and stooped to the yoke of sublime and supreme law, in His life by Incarnation, and in His Death for the Atonement, we can hardly call it unjust. It may be perhaps always a mystery, it must be intolerable to flesh and blood, but it is an infinite blessing to all who follow in the Master's footsteps and embrace His Cross. Every truth,

the very simplest, will be found to embody at the core two opposed elements, two incongruous factors, two mutually inconsistent and exclusive significations which illuminate one another by denial. Right, by way of example, rules the world, and yet might prevails, or seems to prevail. Love is the law of God, and yet cruelty abounds and superabounds, and some organisms (we may say confidently, all organisms, more or less) are equipped with structures and functions that often prove but superlative instruments of torture. Honesty, say the copy books, is the best policy, and yet the rogue succeeds and amasses a colossal fortune, while his honourable competitor ends as a bankrupt and pauper. But all these instances of what we call undeserved suffering do not disprove or condemn the great principle at stake. For the Cross does not promise material prosperity. We have invariably to consider the permanent part of us, in the light of eternity, namely, the spirit and the moral and religious development of the spirit. Christ's recognition of the stupendous law of vicarious and innocent suffering does not convict God of injustice or unkindness, but shows plainly our ethical codes and standards must be at fault, if wrong exists anywhere. We rashly assume, and the error (should it be an error) must vitiate all our conclusions that innocent suffering is an evil and a shame. But, when we measure it by the Cross, it becomes transfigured and glorified, and it stands forth not merely as a pain, but as a privilege. To give and not to

get, to bear another's burden for him, and not to impose on him our cross, to suffer for Christ's sake, emerges by Divine sanction and illustration as the ultimate culmination of morality. Stagnant peace, mechanical accumulation of property, exemption from sickness and sorrow, a regular reception of the exact dues, freedom from all aggression and encroachment, may suit a vegetable but not a virile man. "*It is more blessed to give than to receive.*" The tremendous transaction on Calvary has revised all our earlier estimates of ethical conduct, and made selfishness for ever impossible, as the one unpractical and impracticable thing. Christians acquire eternal possessions by sacrificing all. In every act of surrender they are enriched with spiritual treasures beyond the reach of avarice's wildest dreams. The historical Great Obedience of the Cross compels them, by the sweetest of Divine necessities, to reign by service and live by daily death. We can admit no compromise here. And every genuine deed of self-denial presents us, so to speak, with a piece of the True Cross.

The standards of morals and aesthetics keep perpetually changing, and are to a great extent relative. This admission does not abolish the fact that they both have also certain absolute and eternal principles. But much of what we call evil and ugliness is justified by no conclusive arguments of right or reason, but depends on mere general agreement, because most persons have consented to look upon it and label it as such. Many things that we designate bad are not bad in themselves, not in-

herently and essentially bad. The ascetics soon discovered this fallacy, and all the sturdiest culture has been shaken into shape by rough conditions and rude cradling. So-called evils frequently prove the finest *incunabula* of the fairest individual lives and civilisations. Poverty, hardship, privations, severe discipline, may be hateful to luxury and indolence, but they form the school of heroes and saints. Great losses constitute the grandest education, and to the patient soul the riches at the heart of sorrow are infinitely sweet. True personality, the Divine attribute we share with and receive from God, will only attain to rich proportions in the rocky soil of suffering. And, if planted elsewhere and nourished in a hothouse atmosphere, carefully shielded and sheltered from every angry blast and buffet, individuality (the private contribution of each man or woman) will display no separate note and present no intelligible difference. Evil, as we misconceive and miscall it, appears to be the main determining factor in the development of all that lends distinction to us and make us other than a flock of sheep. Only by the constant interchange of action and passion, doing and suffering, giving and taking, triumph and defeat, energy and inertia, self-building and self-breaking, acquisition and sacrifice, do we reach the dimensions of responsible beings, moral agents and spiritual conquerors. We learn to reconcile these discords, and to find the soul's saving compatibles lie in apparent incompatibles. Forces on the surface antagonistic at the centre of things seem mutually

and inextricably interdependent. It is only God at play, because it is all Love. Indeed, framed as we are, and composed of warring elements, atoms or electric ions, we should find it difficult and even impossible to represent to ourselves a world or state of life that does not finally repose upon the one basis of action and reaction. Perfect peace has no place anywhere but in the grave. Nay, on examination the grave itself gives up its dead and shows itself to be just the beginning of other life or lives. The external and the internal, the vital and permanent and the temporary, contend with unceasing antipathies, and hearts are purified and horizons enlarged by the process. Stage after stage the accidental is exfoliated and drops off and dies, and the eternal factor assumes fresh forms and wider syntheses, and the path of progress goes for ever upward and rises by crosses and upon graves that are yet no graves. God from the beginning, though of course there never was and never could have been a beginning, was a Creator and resolution (not death) was His instrument, and He consigns no sinner to any tomb or hell that He has not first suffered Himself and conquered. Pain and its Divine remedy grow side by side on one and the same stalk, and so the bitterness of every sting is destroyed before we feel it.

In the Incarnation we have the triumph, the blossoming-point, the supreme manifestation of the Individual, when the Infinite God put on a human form. We have the highest testimony to the fact that the limits which enclose us at the same time



act as avenues of communication and touch all things at all points. Separation means relation, and man is only excluded to include. Progress teaches us this, that boundaries merely exist and operate to be overleaped. Their very obstructiveness comes as a challenge from a worthy foe, to educate us and elicit the best possible in us. Isolation reveals itself as our friend. Red Seas and Jordans and Jerichos, the restrictions of sense and even reason, contracted arenas of effort, disease, death, just by their pure impertinence and opposition inspire us with the determination for victory. Hindrances grow into helps, difficulties and dangers are our stepping-stones. Old resistances, transformed by the touch of faith and the accepted challenge, simply interpret themselves into new relations not yet quite understood, to increase our activities and enlarge the field of our energies. We learn thereby that only thus we enter into our Kingdom. The illusions of childhood and imperfect knowledge, though it cannot be allowed that God really sends them, nevertheless when they confront us as the phantoms of our own creation and ignorance, are beautifully controlled, over-ruled, and used by Him for our better discipline and instruction. So He works through and by gross superstitions and foolishnesses of myths or ritual, which conceal the germ of religious fire. The kernel and the envelope of the sacred light reciprocally act and react on each other, till the truth finds at last a fresh body with a wider blessing, more adapted to the time and the place and the people.

The external and the internal, form and spirit, must be at perpetual variance, for the benefit of both. Perils, barriers, infirmities, approach not as stoppages but as starting-points and appeal to the fighting instinct or passion for improvement, the self-development by self-sacrifice. A life without an ordeal, a world without an enemy, could never make explicit the Divine nature implicit in us. Nothing was or will be or can be obtained, worth having, without conflict. If we possessed no adversaries or adversities we should make them ourselves, and at the bottom of all processes and upward movements lies fundamental antagonism. The closed doors entice us, and not the open doors. When we read anywhere in the cosmos written up, as it were, "No Thoroughfare," we insist on trespassing. We tear down the offensive notice-board, and gaily welcome all the pains and penalties that seem threatened, but prove to be nothing beyond pleasant stimuli. Nature's rewards are often disguised as punishments. The suffering exercises a salutary effect, it braces us for further and yet grander exertions. The measure of a man's capacity is his measure for endurance. The prizes we covet most stand before us baited, not with easy attainment and the sugared sweetness of idle reception, but with spikes of anguish, and jagged teeth of sorrows. Their denials are their exceeding allurements. In the Divine economy of things there are no cheap short cuts to Progress. Nature rewards by punishment, we must pay her uttermost price to the uttermost farthing in her own uttermost way, and

not suppose for a single moment the work to be done can be scamped by evasion of the costs or hurried through like jerry-building.

Stagnation, standing still, resting in the ground gained, as if any step or stage could be final for the infinite spirit, means the negation of Progress. To stop on the road is suicide. The tide must flow, because that is the way of things, and we must go with it and hitch our wagons or vessels to its course.

*“My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.”*

Everything is busy, whether God or man, man or midge, life or death, hell or heaven. We can afford to lose no chances, no time. “Move on,” says Nature, that only asks to serve us, to be used and even abused, to be questioned and tortured by us and in us. Soul-building and body-building, new forms or houses for the new spirit, allow no idle intervals for useless quietude. Willingly or unwillingly we rear the edifice, and move or are moved on. Religion, like all other things, is progressive. It hungers, we hunger, for eternity and for a larger deeper knowledge of ourselves and therefore of God. And so religion, personal religion, has an endless quarrel with theology, the vital with the perishable element, the passing with the permanent. If it were possible for any soul, however mediæval in its tendencies and tastes, to be absolutely content with the divinity of its day, further revelations of truth could not, would not open out. Polytheism was cast out by Henotheism, Henotheism by Monotheism, Monotheism gave up its secret in Christ and the Trinity. And here theology would anchor us,

and leave us chained to old moorings now emptied of all their spiritual contents and earlier passionate significance, when the whole world cries out for a revaluation and a transvaluation of all terms and creeds. But we need not fear for the result. It is God's own quarrel, and personal religion through broader experience is only fighting His battles, and its very failures will be Divine. Theology with its ancient formularies and vested interests, naturally desires to remain where it is, repeating the same old round of the same old dogmatisms, in utter forgetfulness that the point of view keeps changing and what was wise and good and adequate and stimulating ages ago may not possibly be so now. To check free inquiry is to check free growth. Yet the *pabulum* of the first century or the tenth century or even the nineteenth century, could not reasonably be expected to satisfy the cravings and deficiencies of the present twentieth century. Truths, in their innermost essential life, do not alter. But they demand with each successive generation other shapes and other vehicles for expressing their adaptation to the time. Half-filled churches, condemned sermons, convey but one meaning. The untouched masses, the indifferent laity, the thinning ranks of the clergy themselves, all suggest the same remedy. Theology has not grown with the times, with the thoughts and needs and aspirations of men, and it does not represent the high-water-mark of the best (not necessarily the most advanced) thought, and it does not meet the requirements of personal religion. Christianity

has a thousand thousand sides, inexhaustible riches, and it invites us to tap new sources and set free fresh streams of life and teaching, which will reach the lowest residuum of idle apathy or cultivated Agnosticism or aggressive hatred and hostility. The Cross of Christ, when translated into the current language of any given period, will always be found sufficient for any gravest emergency. The dullest observers perceive the contradiction between active personal religion and negative belated passive theology, but do not discern the remedy or reconciliation. So they denounce both alike as equal discomfitures—the one as hypocrisy and the other as fraud. We can hardly find fault with this sentence, however superficial and erroneous, when we reflect on the unfruitful incongruity of things. The conflict must continue and ought to continue, but it should be a productive conflict. “Sit-at-ease-in-Zion” will never regenerate society or evangelise the world, and *corruptio optimi pessima*. A church dying of dignity, a faith rusting out, a creed rotting because it has nothing to fight for, or fight with, may suit obese placeholders, but present a sorry spectacle to others. Individuality, the salvation of peoples and beliefs, seems smothered between the grave-clothes of respectability, miserable conventions and a barren uniformity. And here abides our redeeming hope. Luthers and Wesleys and Newmans exist somewhere and will yet arise in their strength, and shake off the dead weight of prosperity and unloose the healthy forces of persecution. The new religious synthesis only awaits

its predestined protagonist, who will find the inevitable formula and lead to victory the broken but unbeaten vanguard of Progress. The cult, supported by a mythopoeic caste, stands foredoomed and foredamned. Its confident assertions, rightly understood, are but the murmur of impending dissolution. When once we find a fusion and confusion of form and spirit, means and ends, and the worshipper deifies his tools, the iconoclast must follow and commence the purging of the Temple of Truth. Sanctuaries and ceremonies, however awful or holy, sign their own death-warrant when they supersede Christ. National churches are as necessary as sacred books, forms to convey and crystallise their doctrines are indispensable, but if they presume to usurp higher functions, and dethrone the Power which gives them all their meaning and value and sanctity, they become impostures (if legalised and glorified impostures) and must make way for more obedient and accommodating instruments. Establishments are precarious baggage and in the nature of things seem but temporary makeshifts, and like railroads too often rest on "sleepers." Palæolithic man, many surmise, had no religion, but we shall unearth the scaffolding poles some day. And whether he was an anthropoid ape or an embryo Agnostic he must have possessed a rudimentary conscience, which we find in animals, and therefore some sort of religious furniture. There may conceivably be myriads of church establishments, each successive one improving on its predecessor, but there can be only

One Christ. The strength of any religious institution consists in its mysteries or sacraments, its truths and ultimate doctrines. But if the system has ceased to be organic, and has become purely and simply mechanical, it has ceased to be serviceable and vital. It is an encumbrance self-convicted and self-condemned. Every true helpful synthesis must be both autotelic and heterotelic, alike an end and a new beginning. The rule exists, to be broken, and it is the splendid exceptions that alone propagate the truth and extend its life and carry on our progress. As soon as we have measured our bars we have abolished them. Their defiance sounds their own death knell. And everywhere we meet contradictions, but if we take them to Calvary they are reconciled in the light of Eternal Love. This holds the keys of all the problems. God sends us then a blessed blindness, which is really clearer and wider vision, and the clouds disappear and die. They were internal and not external, subjective and not objective, clinging to the circumference and not to the centre. Yet but for sturdy doubts, what should we ever have known? And but for trials, probations, the sweetest proofs of Divine Care and Kindness, how should we have heard of any Cross or Christ at all? We keep praying "*Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.*" And yet how does God in His infinite Mercy enfranchise us? He leads us *not* into temptation by leading us *into* it, and letting all His billows and waves pass over us, and going with us Himself. He "*delivers us from evil*" (or the

evil one) by delivering us *up* to evil and going with us Himself. When He is tempted with us and in us, we feel no temptation. When He is delivered up with us and in us to some evil or cross, we find no bondage. His own Hand holds our sword, His own Breast is our buckler. And the victory that finally overcomes, whether for individual or church, is the enduring faith and the life of love in the Spirit and Power of Christ. But the mercies, that make us soldiers of His Church militant, would be less kind if they were less cruel.

Every new negation, rightly understood, becomes a new affirmation. As of old, among primitive and aboriginal savages, Taboo included both reverence and abhorrence, so now we unearth a common root idea at the bottom of such apparent antagonisms as the sacred and the accursed, the abominable and the worshipful, the negative and the positive. Apartness for good or evil, recovery in the very recoil, personality expressed most clearly when most broken down and diffused and extended in art and science and industry, and each fresh application or acquirement, the religious by the secular, and again the secular by the religious, all invite us to ulterior Lands of Promise and healthy, happy conflicts. An age that has forgotten how to preach and knows not how to pray, may well remember the petition ascribed to Ewald. "O Yahweh, whom that blockhead Gesenius calls Jehovah." It may be we also even now are supplicating an unknown God, and devote ourselves to what is unthinkable in thought and possesses but a



verbal *insignificance*. And yet the Christ of the first century is the Christ of the twentieth. He only asks for the old faith and the old love, married to the light of our larger truth, to set the world again on fire.

## XII

### GOSPEL ANTINOMIES

FAITH and Reason are not co-ordinate and not co-extensive in range or value. Because the former comes first in time, as revealed by the contents of consciousness, and in logic, and appears the premier fact to salute the awakening soul. History begins with Faith and not with Reason, as also does Religion and indeed everything else. *Credo ut sciam*, I believe to know. Life would possess no worth and no meaning without Faith, which is its truest and most compendious expression. The real, the highest existence, the existence of the spirit, can only be interpreted in terms of Faith. It was Faith and not Reason, that saw the Saviour's open tomb, and accepted so simply and devoutly and surely the Incarnation and the Virgin Birth. And none but open hearts and virgin souls to the end of time will behold and witness to such solemn mysteries and stupendous facts. Who but believers shall discern the Risen or Ascending Christ? Had all the Agnostics of every age been present then, with the unbelieving Bishop or the doubtful Dean at their head, they would have marked nothing extraordinary and wondered what all the commotion was

about. And if the *Daily Mail* had been published then, they would have returned in triumph and written letters to it, indignantly declaring that clergymen had a perfect right to criticise the Bible and any doctrine or mystery of the Church and everything, excepting, of course, the conditions by which they held their own Orders. One explanation of the present depreciation of Faith and the present appreciation of Reason seems to be this. Civilisation has a natural tendency to exalt unduly its latest processes and powers and developments, those that are more acquired, at the expense of what merely seems given. We enter the world with this great heavenly inheritance, the dower of Faith. No doubt, it becomes strengthened by use and action, but not to the same extent as that to which we bring our cultivated Reason, which thereby looks more and more appropriately our own, though at the best and greatest a faulty instrument. Unearned property never has the preciousness of property earned by years of hard labour. The first principle, we have said, that greets the dawn of intelligence, rises up as Faith. But at its very birth it is checked and chastened by another principle, its shadow and rival and competitor and friend, namely, Doubt. Any parent may prove this obvious fact easily, by observing the first faint stirrings of consciousness in a child. Doubt, the drag, the safeguard, waits and watches at the cradle of Faith, ready to draw it back if too adventurous. Here, then, we have the simplest possible form of all conceivable antinomies—a divided presentation

in consciousness. And it is to this ultimate, aboriginal fact, starting from a hidden stem or root below consciousness, that Religion or the Gospel of Christ appeals with such startling effect. Education, worship, life, begins in these secret sources that connect us with God Himself and the Infinite. If the Cross of Calvary, repeated in every true Christian experience, were not a blessed contradiction itself, it would speak in vain to these awful springs and energies at the base of all being. For they, too, greet us as a contradiction and pour forth from the same fountain-head cleansing floods of sweet and bitter water. This must date from all eternity, or from the determination of the infinite by the finite, the only way in which God could reveal Himself. And as the antagonism had no commencement in time, it can have no close. The finite denies the infinite, and in the denial assumes it. And the infinite excludes the finite, and in the exclusion includes it. *Omnis determinatio est negatio*, and no less *Omnis negatio est determinatio*. But, if the behaviour of a child's nascent understanding be carefully studied, the parent will notice that the contradiction of Faith and Doubt, the eternal problem for all babies as well as all philosophers, appears to present no insuperable obstacles nor even a grave difficulty, and is overcome at once by a deeper intuition which carries on and up into a higher world the competition, to solve and reconcile it in a superior synthesis. We find precisely the same attitude of transcended hesitation in the literature of primitive nations and uncivilised

peoples. At the same time, it must be admitted, that the contradiction though felt is never clearly recognised or formulated in so many words. It confronts the barbarian or the baby as a fact to be accepted somehow, and a fact that must and will soon find its own level and justify its presence by fitting somewhere and sometime into the machinery of things, when all is more or less mysterious and nothing absolutely intelligible and harmonious.

The simplest truths of Christianity, as delivered by our Lord Himself and expounded and expanded in the Epistles, are pure Antinomies. Yet no one, the greatest and most convinced sceptics, ever dreamed of disputing them. There they stand as fundamental and final verities, embraced alike by Faith and Unfaith or Doubt. For instance, let us take one of the most familiar, a contradiction in terms and yet an unquestionable and unquestioned truth, which the infidel holds and prizes as much as the Christian, who differ to agree here and in many other kindred points. "*Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.*" Who is stumbled by the glaring and staring Antinomy? The trained metaphysician, who has grown grey with serious thought, and the child with its haloed head of gold, both alike accept it in the same sort of way and meet on common sacred ground here under the shadow of the Cross. Who desires proof? Paley himself would hardly expect or ask it, and Herbert Spencer might even bend his head. *Theologia symbolica, non est demonstrativa.* We do not invoke the

ordinary rules of evidence to inquire whether our food is properly cooked or not, whatever Bentham may say. Because, if we did, the dinner would grow cold and our appetites too urgent, before we could thus satisfactorily settle the question. The homely saying remains true, the proof of the pudding is in the eating. And, in like manner, with the great Gospel Antinomies, the challenge falls on Faith and not on Reason. The example just given appeals immediately to something within us, above and beyond demonstration or any mathematical steps of rigorous conclusiveness. We feel, without wishing for further inquiry or examination, that we are in the presence of an ultimate fact that is its own proof and shines by its own light, and needs no other. It emerges at once superlatively and even superfluously self-evident. The heart of man answers the Heart of God, and acquiesces in the revelation that would be only degraded by mere rational arguments and requires no further support. Reason, if enlisted in the service of criticism, would inevitably suggest misgivings. It might declare, "This, of course, is nonsense, though sublime nonsense—poetry—beautiful sentiment, but utterly unpractical, and therefore no good working principle for a rough working world like ours." And it is perhaps, this lurking shadow in the background, this latent suspicion, that as a foil or setting makes the precious truth shine out more clearly and convincingly. We inevitably cling the closer to our treasures when we entertain the least doubt that our possession of them may be imperilled. And the

truths, which anchor the soul to eternity and unite us to God in Christ, we shall not surrender at any cost. By the terms of our tenure of existence, we must fight for all we have and hope to retain. And the more confident the opposing doubt, the more secure grows our grip of the belief that is dearer than life itself.

Every line of thought infallibly begins and ends in some paradox or antinomy. And the presumption then arises that we stand in the immediate neighbourhood of some tremendous truth, to which our earthly faculties can only be stated in this contradictory way. It is just when we feel and find no bottom, when the ordinary chart fails us and the ordinary compass gives no direction, that we know we are nearest land and the haven where we would be. As the Indian juggler appears to throw his ladder of rope into mid-air and attach it firmly to nothing in empty space, so we who step out boldly into the great void of the Unknown in quest of God, notwithstanding deadly dilemmas and insoluble antitheses, find the very antagonism our main support, and rest ourselves on the rock of eternity. The average (garden wall) thinker, the speculator who on principle never digs below the practical and the surface of things, argues thus. ‘“ *Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.*” I must traverse this assertion as contrary to all my experience and the testimony of all historical records. We know the very opposite to be the right version of the fact. Does not Emerson, a mystic and muddler himself,

admit that people will always accept you at your own measurement, and value you according to the price you put on your own services and reflections? I fear some miserable copyist has read into the text the unhappy gloss he found on the margin of the manuscript. And I should amend the Gospel declaration in this manner, "*Whosoever exalteth himself shall be exalted, and he that humbleth himself shall be humbled.*" "

We may profitably, after this gross miscarriage of thought or criticism, look at another magnificent Gospel Antinomy. "*Whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it.*" Here we have the superb and supreme high-water mark of Divine Philosophy, from the lips of Christ Himself. It stands, divided *toto coelo* from vulgar criticism, as one of the final consummate proclamations of Truth for all time. Let no misconception be made here. Nothing in heaven and on earth can escape or ought to escape reverent and often adoring criticism, seeking the light on its knees and at the foot of the Cross. Only a bigot or an ignorant fanatic would deny this. We are allowed—nay, we are even commanded to criticise not merely the Bible but also the Character and Conduct of God. Life is and always was and always will be a criticism of Nature and therefore of Nature's God, as He intended who implanted in every heart the right and desire of judgment, and only asks it to be reverent and religious. "*Put Me in remembrance, let us plead together.*" The Church itself grew into definite



shape as the sublime product of criticism—namely, that of the Holy Spirit speaking through holy men. And the Bible, too, has been handed down to us as the result of prolonged and exhaustive criticism, and our Lord and His apostles and evangelists following His example in their treatment of the Old Testament carried on the process. “*Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of Me.*” Even if we translate the word “*search*” as “*ye search*,” the doctrine remains the same. Again we may quote, “*Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord.*” And again, “*Righteous are Thou, O Lord, when I plead with Thee: yet let me talk with thee of Thy judgments.*” When we have received not merely Divine permission, but even actual Divine orders, to criticise the Word of God and the Way of God, always in humble faith and love and reverence, we need hardly hesitate to do so. Christ courted this, and invited the Jews to find a fault in His moral character, if they could. “*Which of you convinceth Me of sin?*” But the Divine Paradoxes, the Eternal Antinomies of the Gospel, lie in a world by themselves, in which criticism of any kind would have no reverence and impart no illumination. What they demand is surrender, obedience, absolute acceptance, as the alphabet of the spiritual life. Postulates, axioms, which every philosophy or science requires, we assume—we take for granted. We draw our inferences, we deduce the consequences, we attempt to unfold by degrees their innumerable lessons of

infinite purpose. But to sit in judgment on them would be absurd. They form, so to speak, the cosmic stuff, the primordial data, the spiritual protoplasm, of which we build up the higher spiritual world. We arrive everywhere at last at some seminal centre, beyond which we can travel no more by reason. There are certain fundamental or suprafundamental *foci* and *loci*, which arise at once as goals and starting-points. They cannot be proved, and demonstration or attempts at demonstration would but excite doubt. But there they are, we find them awaiting us at either pole of consciousness, our elements and finalities. We recognise them intuitively as the framework of the spiritual universe, cosmic and perhaps hypercosmic conceptions. Through immediate Faith we admit them into consciousness with our whole being, the totality of our powers, and not through any particular faculty. It is this entire acceptance of them by our entire nature that puts mere Reason out of court at once. Reason may humbly follow after and strive to judge. But it resembles then an ordinary bird of the air endeavouring to fly in the ocean, or an ordinary fish of the ocean endeavouring to swim in the air. We perceive it directly to be out of its place, and exercising a false function. Faith alone is able to entertain mysteries. And it appropriates them, enters into them, not by a circuitous process of ratiocination or by the syllogisms of logic, but by immediate vision. Psychology seems yet in its cradle, and Science generally in its go-cart, and neither can honestly condemn this.

We stand still on the threshold of ultimate knowledge, and we shall never pass beyond and enter the awful *penetralia* unless upon our knees and with our faces in the dust. It may be declared, and we need not dispute the declaration, that Divine utterances corresponding verbally and essentially with the Gospels can be discovered in earlier religions and older doctrines. But, if we concede this, we concede but little. For the point of our Revelation resides in the infinite fact that Christ applied these inspired words to Himself and made Himself the Centre round which they all should constellate. "*Whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it.*" The pith of all the teaching lies in the reference to Christ, in His calm unconscious claim on every one for nothing less than the sacrifice of life, to be regained through death and thus transfigured and glorified for ever in and by His own Resurrection. Nobody now, worth hearing, will deny that Christianity existed before Christ and the Spirit of Christ spoke tremendous truths through the mouths of pagan prophets and heathen seers or poets. Indeed, it seems utterly impossible that the world could have existed a day without some portion or broken glimmer of the Eternal Word. But the Gospel Antinomies stand on a loftier plane of thought and being than any previous proclamations of the Truth. We know, by an infallible interior conviction that now they are complete in themselves, and it is Christ that fills them and makes them perfect. The simple and the sublime, the

crown of the finite and the climax of the infinite, meet and merge in Him alone. "*Never man spake like this Man.*" Such awful doctrines, such solemn verities, personally adopted by anyone else, a Plato or a Hegel, would be but horribly profane, and the quintessence of blasphemy. Falling from the lips of Christ, they sound natural, reasonable and right, and give out the certain ring of full and final inevitableness. They rise beyond the reach of addition or subtraction. Paradoxes, contradictions, yet they address our hearts and the satisfied sum of our human powers, as the last and best possible expression of harmony. The spirit of man, face to face with the Spirit of God, remembers its high descent and its heavenly birthright, and rushes with rejoicing steps into its inheritance.

In the great Gospel Antinomies we find the revision of all older earthly notions, and the reversal of all ancient standards. Ethnic morality has to be rewritten in terms of universal and absolute morality. We have an ethical revolution, and the dethronement of mere relative codes and categories. Brute strength (*debellare superbos*) departs in confusion, discrowned by baby hands and the apotheosis of Divine Weakness. "*Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the Power of Christ may rest upon me,*" "*For when I am weak, then am I strong.*" Wealth with its stupid insolence and studied vulgarity, goes away with void hands and vacant heart to feed upon its emptiness. While the "*poor of this world*" is "*rich in faith*" and "*rich towards God,*" one perhaps "*having*

*nothing and yet possessing all things."* Christ, at a breath, swept away the old false and familiar landmarks, and made the Cross and not man in his prosperity and power the measure of all things. He announced sorrow, and not gladness, to be the source of joy. "*Blessed are they that are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Rejoice and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in Heaven.*" Old estimates of specious honour and spurious virility crumble up into contempt, blasted by the dignity of Divine Meekness and Royal Servitude. "*Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister: and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant.*" Christ had no need to argue, He announced, He revealed, He just laid bare the bases of Truth, the foundations of Right, the fountains of Holiness, and He knew the sight would be sufficient. To behold them was to accept them, and to bless Him and adore Him for ever.

It seems futile to ask, why the deepest verities that transcend the utmost flights of reason and the farthest resources of learning can only be stated as contradictions. If a sinner is persuaded that a Gospel Antinomy alone can save him, if nothing else can reach and touch his heart and reveal him to himself in the light of eternity, if in no other way he can approach God and obtain His pardon and His sanctifying Spirit, if faith and love and penitence make the union of contraries as clear as that of chemical compatibles, if he recognises in and yet above the apparent antagonism an elective spiritual

affinity, and realises that the rational explanations of the unilluminated mind would rather obscure than interpret the meaning, he has no choice but to seize with all his soul what he can and must live by though he does not pretend to understand it. The battle of the cosmos, the riddle of the universe, the history of the world, repeats itself in every heart and must be fought out, solved, enacted, in each individual. All that ever has been and will be must pass through us, be presented to us, accepted and interpreted in some sort of fashion. We have thereby to construct our spiritual mansion, transforming the earthly stuff into heavenly strength, by that Divine Grace which appeals to us in the certain sense of uncertain sounds, through the imperfect medium of human language, under the luminous disguise of the Gospel Antinomies. And as our faith expands and our love increases and our hate of sin develops, we seem to read in their very contradictions truer and higher unities, and begin to believe the darkness is but excess of light.

### XIII

#### CHILD AND MAN

THE inherent constitutional passion for taking an opposite view or attitude, noticeable even in the youngest children, is part of the fundamental contrariety of thoughts and things. "*Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast Thou ordained strength.*" A love of contradiction declares itself at once, and it is and must be a wholesome instinct, a portion of the racial inheritance transmitted inevitably from parent to child. The boy or girl who does not cross your will must be in mischief or unwell. This sense of antithesis, which makes the individual at first regard everyone else as a kind of Dr. Fell, is by no means as unreasonable as it appears without due consideration. It arises as a principle of self-protection, and operates as the most important factor in the growth of the person and the development of character. Children are often ignorantly scolded or severely punished on this account, when they might rather be rewarded. Nature will out. *Naturam expellas furca tamen usque recurret*, and if the healthy spirit of opposition is kicked out of the door it will come in again through the window. Or, if we do disastrously

succeed in cowing the youthful inquirer and crushing the Divine endowment of antagonism, we gain as a result a child that is no child and becomes a man that is no man and no use in Society, colourless, obsequious, cringing, tamely treading with listless, unintelligent feet the weary, dreary mill-round of a monotonous life that does not really live and never can.

A proper boy or girl should have plenty of angles—only give us the angles and the angels will take care of themselves—and pugnacious bristles ready to give and take with a hearty good will. Your child will never be shaken into any decent shape, till he has first tested his budding powers and broken them on the rocks of resistance. These fractures do no harm. On the contrary they call out of the innermost humanity all its best qualities. Unless children look upon their parents not merely as parents but as beautiful enemies to be attacked while loved and honoured, and unless they consider their teachers not merely as teachers but as “beasts” though “just beasts” to be respected and yet fought with to the bitter end, as St. Paul “*fought with beasts at Ephesus*,” they will never attain to any robust feeling of independence. To nip in the bud youthful enmity, when it simply means the fluttering of the unrealised wings of self-reliance, is a fatal and foolish act. Parents and teachers will suffer from this ruinous error in the end almost as much themselves. Let the natural, sound, wise attitude of antagonism be confronted properly with the weapons of sympathy and understanding. Negative



defiance will produce no sane or desirable effect. The innocent savagery of the child, rebelling against all restrictions and discipline even when visibly imposed by love, must not be met by cold repression and the "mailed fist," with apologies to the Kaiser, but answered cheerily in the tone of comradeship with easy explanations and infinite faith. Cosmic impulses will always justify themselves in the end, and must work out their full value in benign consequences, unless we interfere with the process. Perhaps the best boy, and we only want the best, will never say more for his father by way of acknowledgment for kindnesses received and gratitude felt, than that he is "really rather decent." But no better tribute of love and esteem could be offered. We may be sure of this that self-reliance, if only encouraged and not thwarted by iron rules, will only tend to elicit more and more its correlative and complementary principle of dependency. They invariably grow together on one and the same stalk and mutually correct each other's failings. The child who has learned to trust himself will make a good follower as well as a good leader, and the most dutiful son is he who has been taught and permitted to stand alone. Only the one, who has ventured much and proved himself and tested his capabilities by conflict and acquired the knowledge of the battlefield, can be fully aware of his own limits and therefore willing to rely on other people and other resources when the necessity emerges. And the child, in early stages, will fight against the good as well as against the evil. He has to take his moral bear-



ings, and the brute in him (the shadow and survival of his far-off ancestry) that must be crucified at last but is never killed, has to find its place and own its master. The eternal war between the higher and the lower is our cosmic diathesis. And the youngest almost too soon finds he must buckle on his armour, and go forth to fight as a good soldier and servant of Christ beneath the banner of the Cross. If our children become good fighters and fair fighters, we need not grudge them a few hard blows at our expense. It is the privilege of love, that it may blunt on its own breast the edge of anger and the point of enmity, but with the parents' wounds the children are healed.

The very infant has a sort of blind consciousness that evil is present somewhere or even everywhere as an opponent, and until his ethical eyes are open, he naturally vents on the nearest and dearest the hostility evoked by this feeling, not that he hates father or mother or nurse, but he darkly knows he has been born into a belligerent world and must fight for his own hand and his own life immediately. He remotely realises the struggle for existence imposed upon all from their very birth, and the environment of antagonistic forces that would if they could deprive him of everything. Sin, though he cannot understand it, yet infects his atmosphere and casts a dim shadow across his cradle and even the Paradise of his mother's bosom. The organised and inherited race instinct warns him that he may be wronged and he recoils at the far-off approach of injury. His first business is to fight, to take care

of himself and be independent of others as soon as possible. And the more and the oftener he lets the combative craving expend itself on all around him, the more readily he becomes self-reliant. The very protection, lavished so generously upon him by those who minister to his wants, only stimulates him to outgrow it and shake it off. And this clearly demonstrates the importance of directing at once in the right channels this aggressive energy and hostile turbulence. Bad temper, bad habits, even bad friends, may well be battlefields for the evolution of character and independence. There can be no real lasting progress without daily, hourly contests, and no victory will be of much value unless it has been secured at the cost of many desperate defeats.

This psychological attitude, at the genesis of the human mind, would be absolutely impossible if the attitude of the world did not correspond to it. Nature runs on these lines, and on no others. The fighting instinct fits exactly into a fighting universe. Knowledge also is built up in precisely the same way, by the clash of theory and experience. It has been rashly supposed by some that we cannot travel beyond the latter and all we are able ever to ascertain is relative and phenomenal. And in a sense undoubtedly this may be true enough. Yet religion teaches us that the soul, when in union and communion with Christ, shares His consciousness so far and becomes a partaker of the Divine Nature. The influx of new life may be called experience, but it is a reality that transcends experience and a know-

ledge above knowledge. Nevertheless, the fact does hold good that for ordinary purposes and practical work we do not get beyond experience, just because we do not get beyond our own minds. Though St. Paul said "*I knew such a man—whether in the body or out of the body I cannot tell, God knoweth—how that he was caught up into Paradise and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.*" Theory, speculation, however, runs before, and keeps making daring guesses, often false and sometimes true, and experience slowly follows qualifying its assertions or drawing different conclusions from the same premisses. The error itself, by the sheer force of misdirection, and by the recoil from the blunder, may indicate the right road to patient observation. Just as mercy and justice are reconciled in a loftier unity, so imagination and fact only quarrel to arrive eventually at a better synthesis. What would history be without the halo of legend and myth? It is these that add the requisite romantic element, which give the dry bones of the bare details their vital splendour and spiritual power. Mere facts possess no significance or use whatever. They lie dead or dormant, unhelpful and unproductive, till fancy comes with the divine fire (*divinæ particula auræ*) and breathes upon them the breath of life. Then they begin to arrange themselves, they are charged with a definite meaning, they speak to the spirit, they instruct, they edify. Information imparted by statistics, with no kindling and creative principles behind them, is no information but the letter that

kills. Collision between fact and fancy, between poetry and truth, between sentiment and science, brings light and beauty. No lesson, that lives in the memory of man, could have attained its place as a spring of mental action, unless it had been a battle-ground on which contending opinions struggled to the death, and had fought itself into an eternal joy and possession. Facts do not, cannot fructify, till the aureole of the imagination has played about them and glorified the ugly blots and transfigured the naked blanks. We want spiritual food, even when we are least aware of the need, and dreary tables of figures and bald statements of results will never furnish this. Metaphor and humanity must come to the rescue and open out all the resources of the soul to quicken the body of dust. But when facts have been interpreted thus, they become symbols and meet us with a sacramental service and infinite suggestiveness. Before they were rubbish, now they are a religion.

The individual, the child here repeats the story of the race, in its dim cradle and the twilight borderland of origins. The young have a marked preference for fiction. And to punish them for untruthfulness, before they have grasped the distinction between fact and fable, is to be stupid and cruel. The lies of children are often beautiful and even true relatively, true to their age and feelings and point of view and limitations, but the lies of adults are seldom otherwise than hideous, because usually the refuge of the cowardly and contemptible. The young are constitutionally incapable of seeing any-

thing whole, fair and square in all its bearings. They see what they wish to see and expect to see, in connection with a fresh vivid fancy and the poetic colouring of primitive periods. The tragedies and comedies and legendries of early ages come surging up from the dusky regions of the past, and shed their eclipse on the present. These unforgotten racial memories forbid the possibility of severe accuracy. And the falsehood of the child, punished invariably in some brutal manner without the remotest relation to the offence, is not so much a lie frequently as an echo of other times and other climes. He fights the battle of the past. An average healthy child is probably unable to speak the truth, according to the standard of grown-up people, just as the manufacturer of a quack medicine or a modern statesman before an election is unable. To the former the dull world of fact, that we contemplate through the spectacles of age or interest or party or prejudice or class or creed, seems a fairy-land of marvel and mystery. He has not yet discovered or established his working adjustments. As a little knight errant he roams about seeking for dragons to destroy and difficulties to overcome. He cannot look beyond his own peculiar horizon, from a standpoint steeped in all the hues of the imagination. Right and wrong, good and evil, truth and falsehood, with him melt into each other, they are not divided by inexorable and impassable gulfs. He has not yet acquired all the advantages of copy book morality. Indeed he will probably build his code of ethics in quite another way. Breaches of

the moral law, under the dispensation of kind or unkind parents and wise or unwise teachers, will bring the inevitable consequences and penalties. And he will learn, rather by the pain or suffering inflicted on others through his transgressing acts and words, than by the punishment inflicted on himself, that he must choose the good and reject the evil, and fight against the three great devils of impurity and intemperance and infidelity. The real danger and real *crux*, however, for children lies here. Parents and teachers say one thing and do another, and their lives contradict the profession of the lips. If only their early guides always practised what they preached, our children would have a better chance in the eternal war between light and darkness. As things are, it is astonishing how little the young are tainted by the pestilent example of their elders, and how often their innocence passes unstained through a moral or immoral atmosphere that would poison an angel from heaven.

If we turn, by way of illustration to metapolitics, and try to ascertain the regulating principles at the back of politics, we shall find they are mainly two for ever opposed to each other in a profitable antagonism—namely, individualism or the conservative bias and socialism or the liberal bias. The former dwells in the present and looks backward, the latter also dwells in the present but looks forward. Socialism, the liberal instinct, in its essence remains unselfish and gives pledges to the future. All its policy is or ought to be conditioned by the prospect of the coming generations, and its

beacon star shines out along its course as a grander ideal configuration of broader aims and interests. Its centre of gravity, its determining point or moment, realizes itself in a regard for others. Immediate advantage for private personal ends conveys no meaning or attraction to its true exponent. He views himself always in connexion with others, with the vital expectation that the saving clue to the problem of the present lies in the future which will redress the balance of fortune in the favour of the whole community and not a privileged section. And it is difficult, almost impossible, to make the average child (healthy, bellicose, sentimental, imaginative, young savage, as he should be) take any enlightened interest in the future, beyond the absurd idea that when he is grown up he will be able to go anywhere and do anything and have whatever he likes. Yet the impact, the slow, continual pressure of what is to be and what must be, contending in his mind consciously or unconsciously with the present and the past, goes far towards making and moulding his character. Providence of any kind at first seems abhorrent to him, and the calculation that considers the morrow or lays by for a rainy day repels him as a cold-blooded business. Child of the moment, in which he crams an eternity of force and significance, he takes life at the bound and the past as the present. But the knocking of his dear, naughty little head against various stone walls and stiff fences of older persons' prejudices and Society's conventions, when repeated with sufficient frequency and vigour, gradually arouse



him to the knowledge that prevision may be good, and Prometheus was perhaps wiser than Epimetheus. If he is to live and play a virile, useful part in the world, he must act as his parents and teachers and kind, beautiful enemies, and look before he leaps. The future must be reckoned with. The game of consequences, as well as the game of cricket or football, comes in and presents its credentials and excitements and prizes of its own. He is only a boy, certainly, but still he has a vested stake in his school or home or country, and though a boy and indeed especially because he is a boy, he must do something. A "blooming hero" he need not be, he does not care to be, in the cant of jingo extravagances and a spurious Imperialism, which corresponds to no true craving in human nature, but nevertheless he can, he must, he will play up and play the game to the finish. Yes, even a boy may be in at the death. We can hardly overrate the influence of the future for young people, in colouring the complexion of the present and giving bone and sinew to life, when the battle of competing claims fairly and fully begins. Then, by some glorious magic a transformation of being occurs, and a new drama proceeds to evolve itself. The child of the moment becomes the child of eternity. England expects, because his parents and teachers and all his friendly adversaries expect, that he, too, as did his father and grandfather and ancestors who drew a long bow or wielded a battle-axe at some beastly old French place (like Agincourt) which he cannot spell correctly and possibly would

not if he could, will do or try to do his duty. It is all still a manly game, a regular hurly-burly, this conflict of the present with the future. But, as he becomes stronger, the love of fighting for the highest and the best grows upon him, till duty is delight and habit a second nature. And now he wages war, not so much for the desire of victory or the passion of sport, or the wild joy of battle, in the pride of his powers and the brute exercise of brute strength, as for the pursuit of truth in faith and fear and the love of God and man. The drawing of the Cross constrains him. He perceives that service for others, self-sacrifice, with all the claims converging on him as if the eyes of the whole world were regarding him and encouraging his individual efforts, is the finest thing. And nothing but the finest thing will ever move him now. He still hears the call of the past, and the dim cries from grand old battle-fields that with their deathless history yet shake the nations. But it is the call of the future that compels him most. He is a trustee for this, a steward for the mightier race as yet unborn, that will be the better and braver for each gallant word or deed of his now, and will also play on and play up and play the game on larger lines.

It appears an obvious truth, that lies on the very surface of things, that nothing worth having was ever won without a struggle. What lightly comes, lightly goes. Unearned money is quickly spent and of no value to the possessor. Experience accepted, at second hand or third hand from others, is no experience. Character assumed, conduct imitated,

at no cost and with no conflict, can only develop slaves or cowards. Eternal watchfulness, eternal contests, are the price we pay for all our truths and treasures, our most cherished charters and liberties. Japan has been called an exception to this cosmic law. But a deeper knowledge, a real acquaintance with Japanese history, teaches a different tale and shows the one old result from the one old cause. There was an adequate preparation for these splendid fruits. Progress by antagonism, conquest through defeat, success after failure, and a new and nobler synthesis arising out of each conflict to find fresh and greater enemies overcoming first and then again overcome, and so on continually—this, with all the passion and incident and agony of some sublime tragedy, not without the touch of Divine laughter that yet is full of tears, constitutes beyond the shadow of a doubt the supreme principle to which we must each one submit in free and willing service, which God Himself accepts in the very limits of Creation. We cannot pass outside its governing reach, we may not even conceive (in any thinkable form) a better or another way. And we do not understand it clearly, till we carry it to the Cross of Christ and read it there written in His blood. But at last we do realise something of its universal meaning, and know indeed that its other name is infinite and everlasting Love.

## XIV

### “ HE THAT SITTETH IN THE HEAVENS SHALL LAUGH.”<sup>1</sup>

SIR Oliver Lodge has left on record these remarkable words, which perhaps some day he may regret he ever wrote. “ The higher mind of to-day is not worrying about his sins at all, still less about their punishment.” We may conveniently compare with this big utterance the testimony of the Haggada. “ The earth shook and trembled and could not find rest, until God created Repentance : then it stood fast.” It may be alleged, that the vast difference between the two statements represents at root the gulf between the ancient spirit and the modern, the religion of fear and the religion of faith and love, or theology and science. But unfortunately facts, and facts of the present day, do not warrant any such confident assertion. Declarations and personal experiences, whether formal and measured announcements *ex cathedra*, the ripe results of liberal learning and advanced teaching, as well as passionate expressions of individual sincerity from ordinary

<sup>1</sup>See my poem “ The Laughter of the Lord,” in “ *Matin Bells* ” (F. Ballin, London).

persons, conspire to prove that Repentance forms as large an element in the best exponents of modern or contemporary life, as it did in the earliest documents of the Old Testament. Man might almost be defined religiously, as a being who repents. While, on the other hand, a devil might be roughly described as a being who does not repent. We cannot change the spiritual centre of gravity, the Love of God, to which the immediate response is repentance before love and faith. To think, or suggest, that we have outgrown the need of penitence and the ensuing and corresponding pardon, seems as ugly an idea as the poor mother's triumphant remark that her boy had long passed out of mere Bible reading and gone on into the newspaper. Of course, Sir Oliver Lodge only intended to condemn a perverse and morbid sorrow for sin, that certainly "*worketh death.*" Let us confess, he means, our sins immediately and honestly, lay the burden down once for all at the foot of the Cross or at the bar of Conscience or the Unknowable, whatever our Divinity may be, and then manifest the reality of our repentance by a changed life. If we keep perpetually calling up the ghosts of buried or unburied sins, to humour an unhealthy craving and gratify a mock religious lust, we shall not be able to do good work and throw ourselves into the onward movement that makes for light and liberty. No doubt, there is among devout myriads a diseased pleasure in dwelling upon the memories of old excesses, that can be indulged no longer, and yet by their resurrection on moments of imagined remorse or unhealthy

regret yield an illicit and fearful joy. Who has not met with people, that ostentatiously boasted of their "conversion," and still took a ghoulisn delight in recalling their ancient debauches—simply as a solemn warning to others, and smacked their senile lips with an unctuous satisfaction they could not conceal, as they duly chronicled the filthy records of the past? Nevertheless, we find now among our soberest preachers and sanest teachers a just insistency on the need of daily confession and daily repentance to be followed by regular discipline and appropriate action. It would be impossible to listen to one of our leading spiritual guides, or to read a book of devotional instruction, at the present day, and find there any sentiments at all resembling or approaching Sir Oliver Lodge's unguarded words and random rhetoric. For a religion, without repentance as one of its principal ingredients, cannot be called a religion in any accepted or acceptable shape. Only a creature, conscious of no relations to God, or rather unconscious of any relations to God, would be destitute of a besetting sense of sin, and frequent sorrow for sin inevitably arising out of this. Nature sometimes produces abortions, imperfect plants, flowers, animals, and then she proceeds to repent. That is to say, she endeavours to repair her incompletenesses or defects by producing something better and something that conforms to the given type. A vein of obvious Repentance, exhibited in a cosmic sense and sorrow for physical sin, seems to run through the whole of Creation. Indeed, it may be alleged, without irreverence, that it possesses

a God-like feature, because it contains, as we shall perceive presently, a very decided Divine element. And, if it did not, it would afford no guarantee for moral and religious reformation, and no pledge for spiritual progress. Repentance, as a principle for guidance, embraces an active as well as a passive side.

But what is the attitude of God and Nature towards the impenitent? "*He that sitteth in the Heavens shall laugh, the Lord shall have them in derision.*" This suggests no vindictive or penal spirit, for our Father is quite incapable of revenge and never punishes us, because there is no need and we punish ourselves sufficiently. Some have fancied in these strange and startling words of the second Psalm the mocking note of contempt or scorn, as if God could by the faintest possibility entertain such an earthly and sordid and petty a feeling as this. He is, of course, and ever was and will be, intensely Human, but only on the ideal plane, purged of all grossness and even the most splendid spitefulness to which a great King might condescend. Irony does not express the meaning of the text, nor yet Humour, though it approaches nearer to a solution of the tremendous truth. God's ways and God's words must ultimately justify themselves in the final results and their unsearchable riches. Inevitably, and as it were automatically, things in the end dispose themselves, not as we perhaps proposed, but as the Supreme Architekton intended at the very outset. So when there comes a clash between the Divine Will and the human will, we find in the

foregone issues, we hear, so to speak the ethical laugh—we are broken on the rock of the Triumph of Righteousness. We realize the futility, the infinite presumption and absurdity, of our struggle and the exceeding falsehood of the forlorn antithesis. It is not the laugh of Pride or Arrogance, but rather logic and reason working out through our opposition itself benign and beautiful conclusions.

As we know, *sunt lachrymæ rerum*, and recognize the note of tears in everything, so also *sunt risus rerum* or *est risus rerum*, we feel the Divine Laughter no less than the Divine Sorrow. It is the exultation at the heart of all, that wrong can never be victorious at the last, the eternal consciousness that all is really well for all. Some of us, when we were young, had to read and perhaps learn by heart an ingeniously perverse hymn, a mixture of crude Deism and Calvinistic narrowness, in which we may remember two lines embodying a peculiarly diabolical sentiment, in case of childish errors or innocent indiscretions :—

“ The God who dwells above the skies  
Will look with vengeance in His eyes,” etc.

It seems hardly necessary to repeat that the Laughter of the Lord or the Laughter of Nature signifies nothing of the sort. No, it simply means that evil cannot prosper, however it may flourish apparently or really for a time, and stands foredoomed and foredamned for ever. Morality laughs at the magnificent impositions of error and superstition, and, like David of old, runs to meet



mere empty bulk and blasphemy with the confidence of inspiration. “*The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong.*” But in Right alone do we have the true irresistible Might, which at the court of final appeal wins all along the line, and can alone afford the luxury of honest laughter. Religion, the religious life, oscillates between the two poles of infinite Sorrow and infinite Joy, according as good or evil for the while predominates. And yet the cosmos for ever smiles through its tears. On the last analysis, it is the ethical laugh that prevails and rings out the false and rings in the true. No doubt, to the guilty soul at enmity with God, the sentence has and must have the sound of discord and the savour of remorseless derision. And this very interpretation should suggest at once the hopelessness of a hostile attitude. Fear and shame and hatred of holiness alone import a quite alien idea, by the transference of the imperfect to the perfect and the earthly to the heavenly.

Here, as always, perhaps :—

“ We receive, but what we give,  
And in our light alone does Nature live.”

The deaf or defective ear, the diseased heart, will colour whatever comes, and convey to the purest sources something of their own morbid medium or impurity. God is vindicated by the issue, and the vindication may be discerned through faith and love at the first feeble beginnings and out of the most overwhelming defeat. And this irrepressible note of the ultimate victory of Truth, to which the voice

of Nature and the voice of Conscience, and the voice of Holy Scripture alike give testimony, should, if rightly understood, call sinners to Repentance as nothing else can. It is the "Divine event" of ethics made audible.

Religion, to be of any vital use and efficacy, wants to be rediscovered now. It has lost its old original charm and frank freshness, by the vulgarity of our modern methods and instruments. We are waiting for the revelation of some new saint or prophet. To the great American Republic belongs the credit of having literally rediscovered Woman. When chivalry deserted the Old World it took refuge in the New. Italy and France still preserve the forms of chivalry, but not the spirit. England has lost both the forms and the spirit, and it may be that Germany has possessed neither yet. But re-discovered Woman surely means Paradise regained, and therefore it is to America that we look hopefully for some restatement of the Gospel of the first century in the terms of the twentieth. And who shall say that the modern revelation will not come from the lips of her women and from the lives of her women, so helpfully idealised by a restored and nobler chivalry? Perhaps it is to some new type of feminine excellence that we shall gratefully return, and read yet larger lessons and more fruitful principles. The whole world, sick at heart of commercial greed and coarse materialism, cries out for Repentance in a thorough revision of ancient faiths and symbols and illusions. Deceive us, if you will, it says, but deceive us to a better purpose

and deceive us as God deceives and God betrays, by robbing us to enrich. But what does Repentance really mean? Is it a pose or a posture, a spirit or a temper or a life, the possible or the impossible? To state the question, appears to answer it. For what God demands, and the age requires, is still just a "*broken and a contrite heart.*" We must offer, as indeed always, not the reasonable and the possible service, but the unreasonable and the impossible. For of the incomplete is exacted the complete sacrifice. But there Christ supplies the one unifying point. Character is *complete in Him* alone. God, the perfect Personality, makes ours also perfect thus. But, we may well remember here, if it were only difficult it had been done already, and if it be impossible it shall be done. And, just as when God orders us to execute a task He also enables us to execute it, so in spiritual matters moral purpose implies the power. For the penitent soul, that trusts and loves and waits, the wildest dreams come true. Christ told the man with the withered arm to do an impossibility, to stretch forth his hand, and when he obeyed he found he could do so and did it. Our ethical sense is the interpreter (nay, the keeper), if the bold expression may be allowed, of God's conscience. It shows us the way in which the Father thinks and feels Himself. But to this end, in order that we may get a clear testimony, we need more self-discipline. He that is free from all, is master of all. If we train ourselves to care for nothing worldly and value nothing earthly overmuch, we soon find the world and the earth under our feet.

Automatically we rise above them. We possess them because we possess them not, and they no longer, through the senses and by dark desires, tyrannize over us. Despised and rejected they become our tools, and we are enfranchised, "*having nothing and yet possessing all things.*"

"*This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.*" But we cannot separate faith from repentance, they go together, and are part of one great spiritual moment—which looking outward and upward is faith, and looking inward and downward is repentance. And their spiritual co-efficient or co-determinant is the "*victory*" or power, through obedience "*that worketh by love.*" When we really repent and believe, the thing is done—the fight fought, the triumph gained. *Natura vincitur parendo.* Yes, and in like manner, *Deus vincitur parendo.* God or Heaven, or the Kingdom of Grace, stoops to all who stoop themselves. The doors and windows of the impossible open immediately to such and let them in. They enter thereby into their awful inheritance. The obedience of repentant faith has the promise of both worlds, of time and of eternity. There is no question of desert here,—

"For merit lives from man to man  
And not from man, O Lord, to Thee."

God rewards us no more than he punishes us. For as the broken law brings its own penalties, without any special Divine intervention—a purely material and mechanical conception—so the unviolated or observed law brings its own blessing. We practi-

cally reward and punish ourselves, according as we obey or disobey. But still we can claim no desert. "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say "We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do." Repentance recognizes the impossible, and by accepting it overcomes it.

It has been asserted that Repentance has something Godlike about it and contains a Divine element. And this is in strict accordance with stern everlasting fact. Humility forms one of its most vital and fundamental constituents. Theologians too often follow each other like sheep, treading the same dear trite familiar ruts, and hedged in by the same narrow regular round. Yet we have all long ago given up the Gospel of Malediction in the Imprecatory Psalms and other portions of the Old Testament—all, perhaps, except a few exclusive and extreme Calvinists, who yet linger on in the friendly darkness that they love. But we must now bravely confront the truth that large sections and numerous passages of the First Covenant, ostentatiously exhibiting the glorification of God by Himself, may not be taken seriously, but are only the setting of the picture, pure poetry, Oriental metaphor, ornament, hyperbole, lavished at a time when extravagant adulation was the custom, and form everything, and the King himself a ceremony. We except, of course, the wholesome pride of self-respect and self-reverence, and the jealousy of a jealous God for His honour. This almost goes without saying. Divine morality, so to speak, cannot be

lower than man's or other than ours in kind, whatever the infinite difference in degree, if there is to be any common ground of approach and intercourse or a religion at all. But still, while Christ remains "*the brightness of God's glory and the express image of His Person*," God is and must be the very humblest thing in Heaven and on earth. It was the Saviour's crown, that He "*came not to be ministered unto but to minister*," and was the Servant of servants. "*Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in Heart*." Look only at the symbols of our faith, the Lamb, the Dove, the Cross, beyond which we cannot go, the first and last words of Christian religion. Recall the ideal given by our Lord Himself, when He took a little child and set him in the midst, and said, "*Suffer little children to come unto Me and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven. Whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of Heaven as a little child shall in no wise enter therein*." And this teaching, while patent in the New, was also ever latent in the Old Testament, when not quite as fully and forcibly expressed. "*A little child shall lead them*." And in Isaiah again we find the clearest evangelical doctrine. "*Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose Name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite ones*." Who could worship a God like an Eastern despot, who kept only pursuing his own glorification? What would be ethically unworthy of a man must be equally—nay,

rather much more unworthy of the Supreme Being. On the contrary, we are taught that our Father seeks us and not Himself. God emptied Himself and became a Servant or even Slave, to serve us. His one universal and everlasting aim has been to give, to surrender, to sacrifice, and keep back nothing. And in giving all, He gave Himself. God was ever exalted most by Mercy and not by anything resembling Pride. “*And therefore will the Lord be exalted, that He may have mercy upon you: for the Lord is a God of Justice: blessed are all they that wait for Him.*” And if we turn to the New Testament, we naturally find this truth everywhere announced or understood. For instance, in the very act of seeming humiliation, our Lord exclaimed with tones of triumph, when the treachery of Judas began to work, “*Now is the Son of Man glorified.*” The shadow of shame, as it appeared to ordinary estimates, He assumed as a shining royal robe. Indeed, from those events, which looked like utter defeat and entire degradation before the world, proceeded the greatest outflashings of Divinity and the sublime assurance of overwhelming and irresistible success. Christ was grandest, most Christ-like, most God-like, in His darkest hours and most dreadful extremities. The lower He descended to conquer, the higher He rose as Redeemer. And though absolutely sinless, yet in His glorious Humility He touched, as it were, the uttermost hem of Repentance, and thus consecrated it and made it evermore Divine. So His precepts have about them a characteristic sweet unreasonableness, because they ask so much and

demand of us the impossible—as if any sinner might be penitent to order. And yet how could it be otherwise? We recognize no challenge in the appeal to the merely difficult. But when we are told to vanquish insuperable obstacles, like an evil spirit or a splendid vice, we grow conscious of our powers, we feel behind us the breath of Omnipotence, and go to the battle armed with the forces of eternity.

“ *Homo capax Deitatis.* ”

One marvellous effect of Repentance is its retrospective as well as its prospective energy. By the Grace of God, it undoes the past as well as provides a safeguard for the future. It unites us to the Life of our Lord, and the outflow of that Regenerating Love which can transform even the consequences of evil acts in the remotest past. For, if Christ lived Himself the representative and typical and universal human life, as He did, our repentance makes us capable of receiving its benefits which abolish time. Joined to Him and resting in Him, our own imperfections and vilest infirmities are gathered up and included and transubstantiated and transvaluated in His Perfection. All our blemishes and blanks, by a celestial alchemy or metamorphosis, reappear resolved and over-ruled and redeemed in His own stainless Conduct. The very blots now stand out as stars in heaven. Our sins, the (so-called) irrevocable word and the (so-called) irreparable deed, judged by a new and nobler estimate, rise up as if they had been the polar opposites in that Eternal Transfiguration of the Cross of Christ. The natural and necessary results



of wickedness are disposed for good and not for evil by that stupendous Sacrifice, which looks both ways, before and after, as the supreme Centre round which the universe revolves. “*And the angel lifted up his hand to heaven, and sware by Him that liveth for ever and ever . . . that there should be time no longer.*” Measured by the standard of the Cross, there can be no past and no future, but one vast present. And in that light the effects of byegone transgressions receive at once their interpretation and remedy. God, not Man, makes the ultimate history. “*I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now therefore be not grieved nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life. . . And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God.*” Joseph, the seer, the dreamer of dreams, the truth-teller, and the truth-teller because a dreamer of dreams, felt a shadow of the Cross falling upon him and rejoiced. Just as Moses, flying for his life, and yet exulting in “*the reproach of Christ.*” Both anticipated the future and discounted the past, assured that the vision was one and perceiving it whole. For, in our Lord’s great and Corporate Passion none were excepted, all were embraced, from the beginning to the end of things, and reaped and shall reap the benefits of His sufferings and “*the Lamb slain from (yes, and before) the Foundation of the world*”—and from all eternity in the Mind and Will and Love of God. We can never hope to

get to the bottom of the meaning of the mystery of Redemption. In it potentially were included each subsequent fresh revelation of light and love, each advance of Science, each solution of some ancient riddle, each development of Progress, each new page opened in macrocosm or microcosm. For the mind of man, no less than the heart of man, was baptized at the Cross in the precious Blood and discovered there other and grander powers only waiting to be summoned forth and conquer the world for Christ. It may be, we shall find, there were prophecies also of higher faculties unfolding like flowers in the gradual and glorious evolution of the race—a pledge that humanity should some day be indeed clothed with all the armour of God Himself, and do as much as Jesus did and even more, through the increasing ascendancy of the spiritual powers. “*Thou shalt see greater things than these.*” “*Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me, the works that I do, shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto My Father.*” For the Redemption still operates, the Redemption still proceeds, leavening the lump of the cosmos, minds and matter likewise. Unsuspected features of latent loveliness, undreamed of treasures of Truth, keep pouring out their riches at our feet and filling our hands till they overflow and drip with fragrance like the wooer’s hands in the Song of Solomon. We draw from unexhausted and inexhaustible sources and resources. Each new invention, each new discovery, implies another and opens another door into our expanding inheritance and the invisible

world. Every end becomes a fresh beginning, and we are realizing at last that to our knowledge and power there are no assigned or assignable limits. The rich and the poor, the wise and the foolish, the old and the young meet together on equal terms and on common ground in the Shadow of the Cross, and godly sorrow proves there that it is joy, and godly fear is hope, and Repentance knows there is a portion for each and even for Dan. There the lost tribes are found, and there lost Eden is restored. Ah, when Christ walked the earth and lived His Life of Suffering, and died His daily Death, when He hung crucified on the Cross of Calvary, and the ribald mocking cry went up "*He saved others, Himself He cannot save*"—then, had faith only been able to see, love would have understood and beheld the blinding glory of Eternity and the great white Throne of thunder and Omnipotence reigning and ruling over all, and just because of that supreme surrender and perfect Sacrifice. And the priests and scribes, at the high tide of their false and fatal victory, had they possessed ears to hear, would have caught an echo of the knell of doom and their own condemnation, "*He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh, the Lord shall have them in derision.*"

Right, Truth, call the fact what we will, represents the principle of order, without which there could be no unity. And this invariably results from the perpetual adjustments and re-adjustments, and antagonism of the moral and physical processes and the interaction of cosmic evolution and free will. The attitude of the worshipper vacillates, so to speak,

between faith and fear, which are subsumed in a higher synthesis that includes both trust and doubt, for ever giving and taking and checking each other in order to obtain the proper balance. God presents Himself as Father and Master, Friend and Adversary, Saviour and Judge, Light and Darkness, One and Many, Local and Universal. Nothing is harder than to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, the rich and wise and mighty (*as* rich and wise and mighty) cannot do so. And at the same time, nothing is easier—a little child can, and does. One step (out of self) will accomplish it, and yet a long life finds it impossible. Joy proves the redeeming element of sorrow, and sorrow of joy, and hope and fear mutually deny, exclude, fulfil, and save each other. Ebal and Gerizim, blessing and cursing, lie never far apart, and sometimes appear to meet and mingle. In old languages, they almost merge in the common root of separation—apartness for good which issues in consecration, and apartness for evil which develops in a ban or condemnation. But at first they were nearly interchangeable, and even now they touch at certain points. Anathema had a similar history, though here the holy aspect has been somehow suppressed, probably from its connection with votive offerings and heathen temples. We see here morality in the making, religion at the parting of the ways, in a sort of hendiadys or *complexio oppositorum*, and we catch a dim and distant suggestion of the aboriginal act of consciousness—subject *contra* object. But, though the law is competition, Right emerges from every conflict the stronger for the

struggle and revealing new ranges of thought and new vistas or visions of love. Justice is the minister of Right or Righteousness, and only terrible from its awful and unutterable purity. “*And the seven Angels came out of the Temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen and having their breasts girded with golden girdles.*” St. Peter had a lightning flash of this conviction when he fell down on his knees and cried, “*Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.*” What conquers and crushes us into the very dust is, not the terrors of Omnipotence or the blasting flames of Sinai or the majesty of judgment, but Innocence, Weakness, Purity, Helplessness, and gentle forgiving Love. It was thus God chose to manifest Himself in Christ, unarmed, defenceless, and, as it were, appealing to our human pity. But that picture only displays one half of the truth. Over against it, as its supplement, we confront “*the wrath of the Lamb.*” And what is more terrible than the spectacle of outraged Love? And to empty it of all severity, leaving behind nothing but a feeble Benevolence, although boundless in its operation, is to misunderstand and misrepresent Christ and substitute a pale and bloodless and contemptible Abstraction. Divine Love is merciless, inexorable as the stately march of physical law, but then it remains Love. Cruel it may often be, but it is a thousand thousand times more really kind, though it uses the cross and the altar knife, than a flabby false philanthropy which connives at evil because it has not the courage to strike hard and do good. Of all the shameful shams and mocking

masquerades of the present day, nothing seems quite so ugly and pernicious and absolutely demoralizing as this. It tends to poison and pauperize human nature at its most sacred source. In the name of the most solemn and beautiful verity, and beneath the shelter of a mere shoddy mimicry of virtue, it goes about degrading society because it will not take the trouble to inquire a little and run the risk of offending a public opinion that needs to be educated and turned into more wholesome channels. It debases the moral currency and offers us the counterfeit coin of sickly hysterical sentiments. It cannot be urged too frequently or too firmly that Love will not continue Love unless it is a good hater and comes prepared to destroy before it proceeds to build up. Tolerance has much to answer for, when it becomes criminal connivance and fatal leniency. Better almost the fires of Smithfield, better almost the axe and rope and gibbet and all the ten plagues of persecution, than a maudlin sympathy which rewards roguery and pampers the worst passions of the heart. Religion's deadliest enemy no longer comes from the ranks of open vice, from impurity and intemperance and infidelity, but from its own household. Wearing its holy badges, appealing to its holy sanctions, equipped with its holy resources, this flagrant Philanthropy slays its tens of thousands while the grosser sins slay but thousands. And we find the explanation of this damning fact, in the studied depreciation or omission of Repentance, as the foremost necessity in any vital scheme of reform. It has become the fashion to excuse and extenuate

the very vilest excesses, as only human and tolerable. Men and women even find it convenient sometimes to explain away the existence of hampering wives or husbands. What is the use of being so particular, when "good form" will carry you successfully through the blackest cloud? Youth must enjoy its little abuses and indiscretions, and youth is rather an elastic term and will now perhaps cover a hoary head. We must not be hard, from the scientific point of view, on the poor victims of misfortune and circumstance. The devil of heredity, or the devil of unequal opportunity, will account for most breaches of the law. If *we* had possessed the same inheritance and suffered the same training or want of training, we should have fallen as low or lower still. "There goes John Bradford, but for the grace of God!" We can all quote this and understand this, and it sounds so plausible and satisfactory, and anything is better than making a fuss or flushing the drains. Was not Mr. W. H. Stead sent to prison because he would poke his nose into matters that did not concern him? Let things alone, and matters will assuredly right themselves in the long run. They inevitably do, and, at any rate, we have Fashion and Science and popular preaching all on our side. "Our brother the hooligan," says the pet pulpiteer, and tears rise to the eyes of beautiful women as they think of joining some mission in the East End of London and thank God they feel so virtuous and emotional—for the moment. But national movements or reforms cannot be made with rose water. And meanwhile, the hero of the

hour and the idol of the drawing-room, "our brother the hooligan," finding his faults so easily condoned, and knowing he can be whitewashed again whenever he likes, without any trouble or cost to himself, goes on his "virile" way, breaking heads, "cracking cribs," and picking our pockets. He is a fine fellow at bottom, explains his ardent admirer, and only wants a little judicious coaxing and humouring, but he must never be forced and never bluntly contradicted. Pat him on the back, and tell him he is the most splendid specimen of the English race, and we are all dying to help him, and then you can lead him about by a thread of silk or like Mary's little lamb. But as for corporal punishment or iron discipline, or proper punishment for acts of violence, we must never dream of such dreadful things. They would hurt his feelings, harden his sensitive nature, and fix him for ever in his naughty habits. We must plead with him, encourage him, make allowances for wild animal spirits and riotous indulgences, but never drive him and never beat him. No wonder the prisons are full and the churches are empty, and the clergyman complains that he is the voice of one crying in the wilderness.

Nor will matters improve while morality (in the form of misguided and feeble benevolence) differs in principle from the teaching of the Gospel, and ignores the redeeming factor of Repentance with its collateral reform and restitution. Here we have the missing link. This, and this alone, is the key that will open the door of a great and growing difficulty—nay, a deadly danger—and let in a saving



flood of fresh light and life. History seems to show that when nations have gone to Capua and people pride themselves on an easygoing indifference, when enthusiasm has become a byword and aspiration an annoyance, when the sanctity of marriage is openly ridiculed and its bond relaxed, when woman has lost her halo of holiness and mystery, and purity its message, when the sense of sin is dead or dying, and science or the public opinion of the period pronounces it but a natural and pardonable infirmity, the evolution of those nations approaches the crisis of revolution. No empire has ever flourished long, when the custodians of its honour have ceased to be very jealous of their awful charge. Irresponsibility prepares the way for, and rings the knell, of retribution. The forces of dissolution have already begun to sap the moral and religious foundations, and the forces of recuperation have failed to act with wholesome and sufficient energy. Decay and destruction set in as soon as the spiritual principles and the working principles of society are greatly at variance, and the lower have usurped the place and prerogative of the higher. Communities rest ultimately on a moral basis, and not on brute force or the best-drilled battalions, and all the bayonets in the world will not save a kingdom when the final sanctions for its existence and the justification for its pride and place have departed. The divorce between ethics and practical policy or the common life of daily procedure, indicates a deadly rift in the national system. It proves that it is out of harmony with its environment, and refuses to accept the challenge

of the eternal antagonism that divides right from wrong. Civilization has grown flabby, and lost its grip of the great realities and moral safeguards. And when religion, instead of coming to the rescue, and attempting to educate opinion and raise the level and tone of society, descends from its holy heights and accepts the miserable standards in fashion, and takes the colours and reflects the views that happen to prevail for the hour, then it has renounced its birthright and plays the ignominious part of a follower or servant and not the loftier and legitimate one of guide and instructor. Timid preaching, or the trumpet that gives an uncertain sound, will always inflict more injury than all the combined cant and rant of the day. Better far the posture of "Praise-God Barebones," than the imposture and organised hypocrisy of "Mr. Facing-both-ways."

Religion now is too much a social satellite, it fawns on fine ladies and grand gentlemen, it speaks in euphemisms and suggests ingenious apologies for every sin new and old. It wears white kid gloves, and seems afraid of handling disagreeable subjects, and is more careful about appearances than about ethics. Decorum in public covers a multitude of sins, and a big subscription veils the blackest vice in private. If he only may dip largely into his neighbour's purse from time to time, the modern clergyman will gladly disclaim the odious and onerous office of being his brother's keeper, and will find abundance of specious arguments for satisfying himself that, after all, the devil is not half so bad and not half so devilish as he is painted. He makes

liberal allowances. Of course we meet with excuses and excuses, we find transgressors and transgressors, and one of the most famous French religious writers wrote his most beautiful book in the arms of his neighbour's wife. But some excuses seem no better than compounded felonies, and some transgressors, like the above-mentioned saint, are worse than any sinner. It is true that the conception of God, and therefore of religion, varies, and must vary, with every age, but this does not mean levelling down when we should always be levelling up. Spinoza and Montesquieu asserted that, if a triangle could "construct a creed and form some notion of the Deity, it would be triangular"—and so God would be, and should be, to the triangle. This merely confirms the fact of the Divine Relativity as a working Ideal. God ought to express Himself in the form and colour of the time, while fundamentally and essentially "*the same yesterday and to-day and for ever*," or He would be of no possible service to the time. There lies no degradation here. This is not the same as the imputation of unworthy acts or thoughts to Him by grovelling minds. And, as Hegel said, the hero is no hero to his valet—not because the hero is not a hero, but because the valet is a valet. Clerics and stipendiary stupidity in high places, with the minds of valets, will here and there always make a trade or policy out of their religion, and hawk it about to the biggest bidder. But the man who affects piety of a sort, because it pays or pleases, cannot be considered really pious at all. Churches should be the clubs and palaces of the poor, but are they or will they ever be

without a radical revolution in our practical ethics?

“Let not the seeker cease from seeking till he find, and when he finds he shall be astonished, and astonished he shall reach the Kingdom, and reaching the Kingdom he shall rest.” But we have nothing of the kind now. No seeking and no finding confront us everywhere in popular preaching and teaching, by which unpleasant questions are quickly shelved. And yet, for a society to live and be healthy, the old eternal problems must be reverently re-opened by our spiritual guides and re-stated in the terms of the particular period. “*Sunt lacrymæ rerum*. Jesus wept, and who shall dare to deny that God weeps yet over us, and Repentance lies at the very root of all things and a sane sense and horror of sin? Christ stands before us not only as our Pattern, but our Power, with the promise of every blessing. Those who rashly minimize sin and the need of Repentance perhaps forget that this cuts two ways and undermines the bases of Holiness. Surely we have travelled beyond the crude idea of Cabanis that thought is a secretion of the brain, and the philosophy (whether pantheism or not) which ignores evil as a mere negation or defect to be outgrown in time? We possess some certainties, and to these we should cling with all our faith as we cling to life. For every truth we appropriate and assimilate, becomes a perpetual eucharist. Is not the moral and religious world at least as real and important as the physical? The laugh, the triumph, the vindication at last, invariably belong to the ethical process. History justifies God, and is religion (as well as philosophy)

teaching by example. "*He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh, the Lord shall have them in derision.*"



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